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*Ephedra trifurca*

**MORMON TEA** is an evergreen shrub. Native to south-western North America and to Mexico, it has small fragrant yellow flowers.

It is also known as Brigham Young weed, Canatilla, Desert herb, Desert tea, Ephedra, Longleaf ephedra, Longleaf jointfir, Long-leaved joint fir, Mexican tea, Popotilla, Squaw tea, Teamster's tea, and Teposote.

*Trifurca* is derived from Latin *tri-* (three) and *furca* (hay-making fork) components meaning 'three-forked'.

The shrub was familiar to several North American Indian tribes as a source of medicine. The Navajo Indians had a dried plant infusion prescribed for stomach and kidney disorders, while members of the Cocopa tribe had a leaf and stem poultice applied to sores. Records suggest however that its most valued medicinal use may have been for the Navajo and some of the Tohono O'Odham Indians in its capacity as a remedy for venereal diseases.

Early North American settlers learnt to use the shrub as an ingredient in tea.