

# FIELD OBSERVATION REPORT

By Mary Wilson

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## Notes From The Field

Moisture (including snow on Thanksgiving and the day after Christmas) since October 2019 is 6.26 inches. With freezing nights the plants are struggling to get started. There are some grasses coming up along with filaree and I did find a few fiddleneck starting to come up. The male Juniper trees cones are almost full grown



and will be opening soon with their pollen.

Male Juniper cones ►

◄ Filaree and grass



**Red-stemmed Filaree**

*Erodium cicutarium*

*Erodium cicutarium* is also known as Red-stemmed Filaree, Stork's Bill, Clocks, Scissors, Alfilaria, Alfilerilla, and Pin Grass. It is native to Macaronesia, temperate Eurasia and north and northeast Africa and was introduced to California around 1771 as forage for livestock.

Red-stemmed Filaree is a winter annual (goes from seed to fruition and dies in a year) or can be biennial (plant takes two years to grow to fruition and dies). It is in the geranium family (Geraniaceae). Seedling leaves (cotyledons) and first true leaves are deeply lobed and have hairy stems. The plant forms a basal rosette with stems growing along the ground, although some may be erect and reach lengths of 4 to 20 inches. Flowers can be bright pink to purple on a long stalk and have 5 petals. Seedpods are five lobed and resemble a bird's beak.



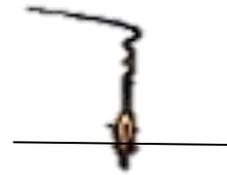
Seed Dispersal Behavior—this plant uses self-dispersal mechanisms to spread the seeds away from the maternal plant and also to reach a good germination site to increase fitness. Two techniques are used, explosive dispersal and self-burial dispersal.



Stork bill seed pods



Explosive dispersal



Self-burial Dispersal

Explosive Dispersal—After flowering the plant launches the seeds by storing elastic energy—as the fruits dry, dehydration creates tension, and elastic energy develops within the spiked and sharp edges of the seed pod and they will stick and hold fast to surfaces so they can spread their seeds to surrounding areas. They will also attach to passing animals and be distributed to other areas.

Self-burial Dispersal—Once the seed is on the ground it responds to humidity and changes its shape accordingly. The seed coils under dehydration and uncoils when wet and combined with hairs on the seed it can move across the surface to a crevice and creating a drilling action that forces the seed into the ground.



The California harvester ant frequently collects the seeds, which germinate in dense rings around their next entry in spring. The entire plant is edible with a flavor similar to sharp parsley if picked young. Among the Zuni people, a poultice of chewed root was applied to sores and rashes and an infusion of the root was taken for stomachaches.

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**National Hugging Day—January 21, 2020.** Kevin Zaborney created the holiday in 1986 in Clio, Michigan.



**The best gift you can give is a Hug:  
One size fits and nobody will care if  
you return it!**



**Squirrel Appreciation Day—January 21, 2020.** This holiday started by North Carolina wildlife rehabilitator Christy McKeown in 2001. It is a day to acknowledge the role that squirrels play in nature and the environment. This is a tough time of year for squirrels and food can be scarce and buried food may be inaccessible because the ground is frozen. The best food to feed squirrels are a variety of nuts, fruits, veggies, and seeds.





## California Ground Squirrel

*Otospermophilus beecheyi*

This squirrel was named for Frederick William Beechey, who explored much of Northern California in 1826-28 as captain of His Majesty's Ship—Blossom.

It has brown-gray fur with cream spots and flecks on its back. Gray fur forms a cape over the sides of the head and shoulders. Whitish fur rings the eyes and black fur edges the outer rims of the ears. It is about 18-inches long, has a

white underside, and a bushy tail.

These squirrels live in burrows and they can be dug down vertically several feet to assure protection. Some burrows house single squirrel occupants, while others may be home to several squirrels with their own entrance. They can be found in Oregon, Washington and most parts of California. They are found in open areas like fields, pastures and lightly wooded areas and spend most of their life within 100-feet of their burrow.

Their diet is made up of a variety of seeds, fruits, acorns, roots, mushrooms and may include insects such as grasshoppers, crickets and caterpillars. They are diurnal (most active in the daytime) and do not tend to socialize with each other unless it is mating season. Mating season is about February to April after they emerge from hibernation. Hibernation begins in fall or early winter and they go into a type of suspended animation. Their heart rate slows down to as little as only a tenth of its normal heart rate and their respiration may slow down to the point where they only take a breath every couple of minutes. Even in this state they will wake up every four to five days for short periods during which they eat food they have stored away.

During the breeding season, mating chases are common, with males chasing females until she is ready to accept one. The females may mate with more than one male and often mate more than one time. Gestation lasts a month and the female will have five to eight babies. The babies remain underground with the mother and the babies eyes open at about five weeks and by the eighth week they are ready to come out of the burrow. They may live as long as six years, but three or four years is their average life span in the wild.

Though the squirrel helps regulate the population of certain pests by consuming them, it is considered a pest, especially in gardens and parks because they will eat the vegetation. They are also considered to be potential carriers of certain harmful diseases, such as bubonic plague and tularemia.

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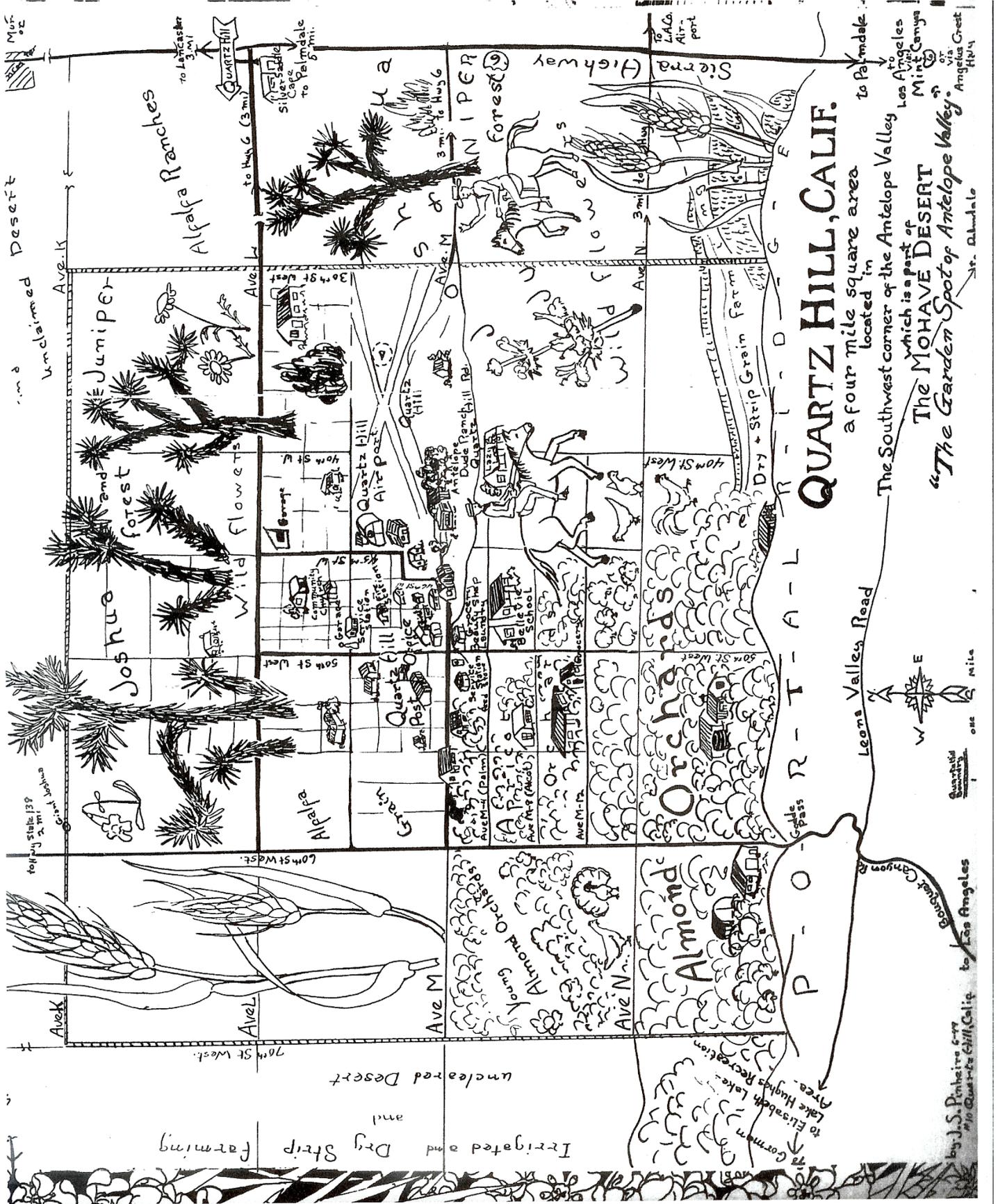
### Map of Quartz Hill, California by Jane Pinheiro

In the 1970-1980s there was a wonderful California Almond shop called Rancho Raviri behind a home in Quartz Hill. They had flavored almonds and dried fruits in gift baskets to buy or ship. While shopping I noticed a map on a wall and it was signed by Jane Pinheiro. I asked the owners if I could take the picture and get a copy of the map and they graciously let me. Jane and Joe Pinheiro moved to Quartz Hill in 1943 and in 1949 Jane put this map together. Hope you enjoy it as much as I do.

Map of Quartz Hill, Ca.

By J.S. Pinheiro

June 1949



# QUARTZ HILL, CALIF.

a four mile square area located in

The Southwest corner of the Antelope Valley

which is a part of

**THE MOHAVE DESERT**

"The Garden Spot of Antelope Valley"

by J.S. Pinheiro  
110 Quartz Hill, Calif.