

GHOST PINE



Illustration by Margaret Eldred, eldredart.com.

If the wind is blowing, avoid standing under a ghost pine! Its heavy, wickedly spiked cones can cause serious injuries but they are also a caloric goldmine.

Ghost or gray pine (*Pinus sabiniana*) grows in the dry foothills of California and southern Oregon where the indigenous peoples have eaten its nutritious, oil-rich seeds for over 9,000 years. They also use the seeds as beads to make jewelry and clothing. The Ohlone peoples of Northern California call this tree saak, which means "pine nut". Oak woodpeckers, Steller's jays, scrub jays and small mammals also enjoy the seeds.

Try pine nuts raw, roasted or paired with salmon – a modern take on traditional dried smoked salmon and pine nut cakes. Ghost pine seeds are also ground up to make flour for baking or mixed with other ground seeds to make pinole, a powder used to make drinks, porridge and flatbreads.

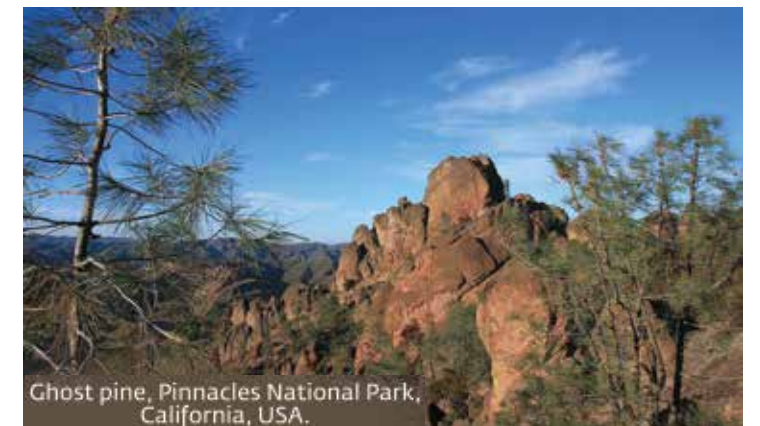
Pine Family – Pinaceae | Conservation status: Least Concern



Pine "nuts" (seeds) are a healthy snack!



Ghost pine seed cone. Photo by Walter Sigmund Wikimedia Commons



Ghost pine, Pinnacles National Park, California, USA.