

Arizona Scorpion Weed



Arizona's "scorpion weed" refers to certain native *Phacelia* species — most commonly blue phacelia (*Phacelia distans*) and notchleaf phacelia (*Phacelia crenulata*) — which have coiled flower clusters resembling a scorpion's tail

Identification

Blue phacelia (*Phacelia distans*): Annual shrub, 1–3 ft tall, with pale blue to violet bell shaped flowers in finely haired, coiled clusters. Found in Sonoran and Mojave deserts .

Notchleaf phacelia (*Phacelia crenulata*): Annual herb up to 18 in tall, with purple violet flowers in hairy, coiled clusters; leaves are lobed/scalloped and glandular hairy Firefly Forest.

Both species are native to Arizona and bloom in spring, sometimes into summer

Contact Risks

Skin irritation: The plant's stems, leaves, and seed pods contain tiny glandular hairs and oils that can cause contact dermatitis in sensitive people.

Reactions may range from mild itching and rash to more severe blistering; in rare cases, reports note possible anaphylactic reactions.

The irritation is similar to poison ivy/oak in mechanism, due to plant oils in the hairs.

Precaution: Wear gloves if handling, and avoid direct skin contact, especially for those with known plant allergies .

Management

Can be removed by cutting or pulling before flowering; it does not reseed.

Herbicide is effective

