

# African and Mediterranean Landscapes at Ferrell Commons

## **Mediterranean:**

A temperate to sub-tropical biome, "Mosaic" landscapes are common. Much of the woody vegetation in Mediterranean-climate regions is sclerophyll, which means 'hard-leaved' in Greek. These eco-regions are semi-arid, and often have poor soils, so they are vulnerable to degradation by human land-use. These regions are also some of the most endangered on the planet, and many eco-regions have suffered tremendous degradation and habitat loss through logging, overgrazing, conversion to agriculture, urbanization, and introduction of exotic species. Many native plants and animals have become extinct or endangered within these systems. Fire, both natural and human-caused, has played a large role in shaping the ecology of Mediterranean eco-regions. Many of the plants are pyrophytes, or fire-loving, adapted or even depending on fire for reproduction.

**Herbs** *Rosmarinus officinalis*, *Origanum vulgare*, *Thymus vulgaris*

Rosemary, Oregano and Thyme, are all highly prized for their culinary uses and originate in the Mediterranean.

**Fig Tree** *Ficus carica*

Although commonly referred to as a fruit, the fig fruit is actually a flower, known as an inflorescence (an arrangement of multiple flowers), in which the flowers and seeds grow together to form a single mass. In the book of Genesis, Adam and Eve “sewed fig leaves together to make themselves loin coverings, (Genesis 3:7)” after eating the "forbidden fruit" from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. However the actual fruit remains disputed over in religious and scientific communities.

**Olive** *Olea europaea*, *Bucida buceras*

This display contains olives of both the green and black variety. The olive is one of the plants most cited in recorded literature; in Homer's Odyssey, by Horace the Roman poet, and is also in all three of the Bible, Qu'ran and the Book of Mormon. Also, originally used for the Olympics “eternal flame,” because of its

association as a symbol of abundance, glory and peace. The leaves were used to crown the victors of friendly games and bloody war, some were even found in King Tutankhamen's tomb.

**Grape** *Vitis*

The fruit of several *Vitis* species are grown commercially for consumption as fresh grapes, dried for raisins, and for fermentation into wine. According to the "Food and Agriculture Organization" (FAO), approximately 71% of world grape production is used for wine, 27% as fresh fruit, and 2% as dried fruit.

**Dwarf Pomegranate** *Punica granatum nana*

The name "pomegranate" derives from Latin *pomum* ("apple") and *granatus* ("seeded"). The byproducts of the pomegranate are said to have a plethora of health benefits: heart disease, atherosclerosis, dental plaque, breast cancer and cardiovascular disease. Because of its historical place of origin the pomegranate ('rimmôn') is mentioned as one of the seven fruits/plants that Israel was blessed with.