

Weekly Plant Photo Edition

8 April 2019

Common Names: chia, desert chia, chia sage

Scientific name: *Salvia columbariae*

TAV location: on Galileo, stand with your back to the utility boxes labeled "22" at the corner of lots 16-17. Across the street is a saguaro on a ridge. Follow the ridgeline to the left. Just as it becomes level with the street there are several showy yellow daisies (desert marigold). The chia are behind the daisies.



Chia is a native annual in the mint family and has all the standard mint characteristics - scented foliage, flowers with an upper and lower lip, and square stems (photo, lower right). The flowers are usually blue-purple but the Village is the proud owner of the rare white-flowered form (seen on the blue trail). The flowers of this plant are held in rounded clusters often stacked one on top of the other. Chia is also culturally significant. It was used by Native Peoples for food (seeds ground and used to make a drink, a porridge, or cakes) and as a medicine (for eyes, fevers, and infections).