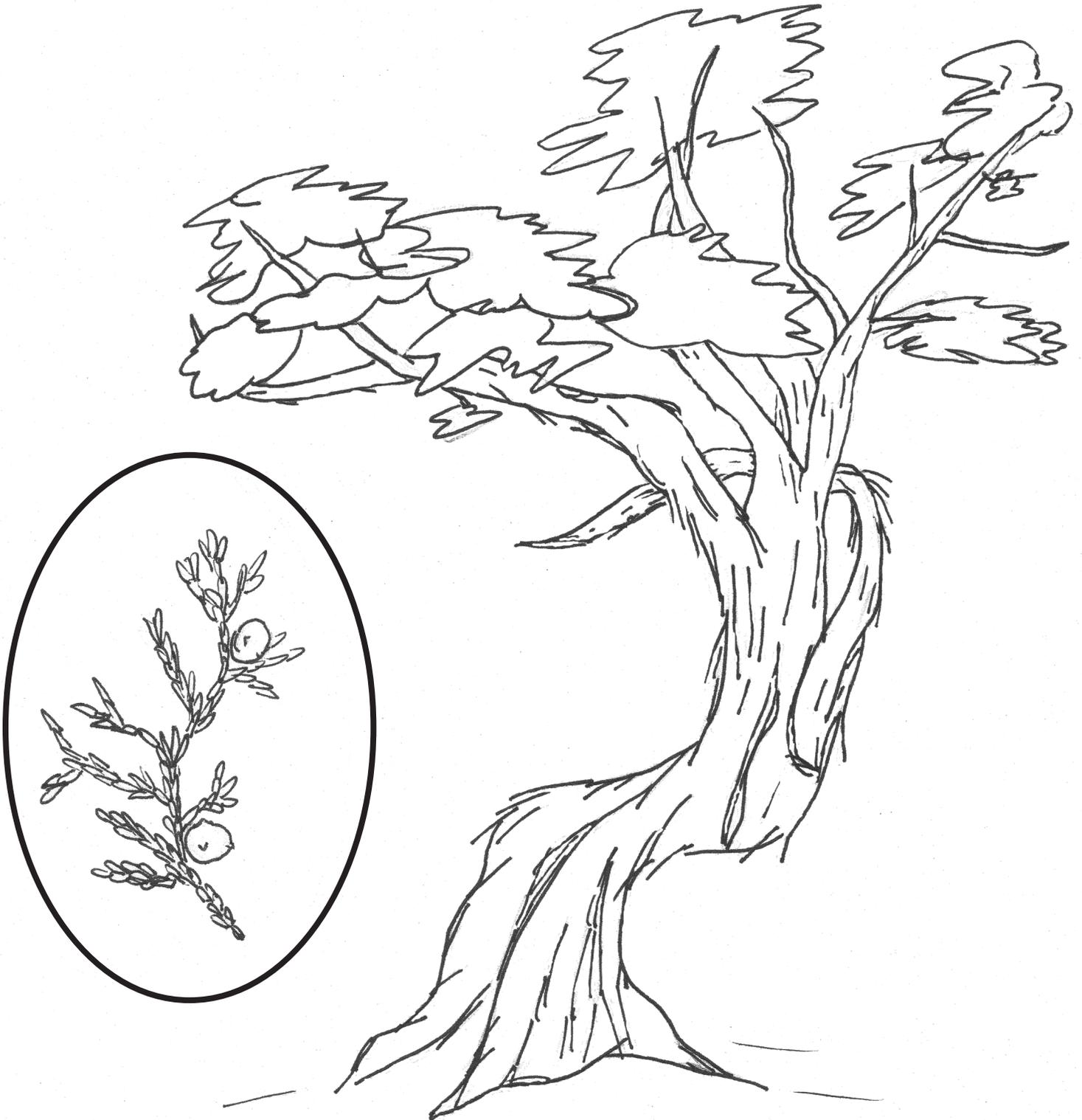


Grand Canyon

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Grand Canyon National Park



Utah Juniper *Juniperus osteosperma*



Living on the Edge: Utah Juniper and Its Superpowers

Grand Canyon has many different ecosystems. Plants have adaptations or superpowers to help them survive where they live. On the South Rim, it can be sunny and hot in the summer, cold and snowy in the winter, and rainy during monsoon season. When it is dry, there can be fires. You're exploring one of the many plants at Grand Canyon that have superpowers to survive living on the edge.

The east side of the South Rim is Desert View. There you will find a pinyon pine-Utah juniper forest. It is very high there, over 7400 ft. It is very windy. The juniper trees can be seen hanging on the edge because one of its superpowers is that its very strong root can go down 30 ft (that's as big as a 2-story apartment building)! The root goes through rocks and anchors in cracks to get water.

Look at a picture of Grand Canyon. Imagine what it would be like to be a Utah juniper hanging on the edge, feeling the wind through your branches, watching a snowstorm heading through the Canyon straight at you. Write or tell someone a little story about what it would feel like to be a juniper tree on the edge of Grand Canyon.

Instead of leaves, the juniper has small green scales that are bendable so snow can slide off and have a waxy coat to protect them and keep water inside. Great superpower, huh? What is something that you or your family put on your skin so it doesn't dry out?

Junipers have bluish berries that are actually cones holding seeds inside. Animals like to eat them. Even humans put them in sausage for flavoring. Try helping to cook something for your family to eat. Take a picture and post it on your facebook page.

Juniper trees can live up to 350 – 700 years. That's a superpower! Look up on the internet what was happening in the world 350 years ago.

If you were a juniper tree, you would have seen a lot in 350 years! 100 years ago Grand Canyon was made into a national park. Since then millions of people have come to Grand Canyon. If you were a juniper tree, what would you tell people about how to protect Grand Canyon so everyone in the future can enjoy Grand Canyon too?

Thanks for learning about trees at Grand Canyon. Color the Utah Juniper page and if you like, draw the Grand Canyon in the background. Post your picture on your facebook page and share your superpowers!