

Ramona Trail to Tool Box Spring

(see map opposite)

LENGTH:	10 miles	SEASON:	Year-round
HIKING TIME:	6 hours	INFORMATION:	USDA Forest Service, Idyllwild, (909) 382-2922 or (951) 659-2117
ELEVATION GAIN:	2,000 feet		
DIFFICULTY:	Strenuous		

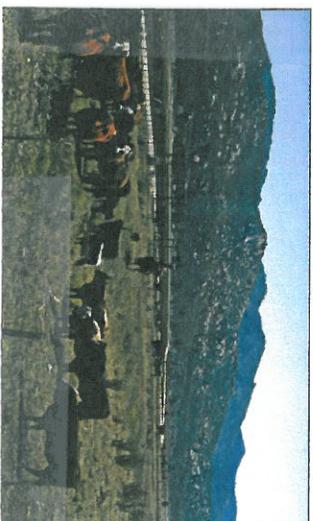
South of the San Jacinto Mountains rises the much smaller Thomas Mountain. This mountain forms the southern border for the intervening Garner Valley. There are few trails on this mountain, the San Jacintos having captured the lion's share with the Pacific Crest Trail and Desert Divide Ridge. Still, the beautiful trail to the top of Thomas Mountain via Tool Box Spring is worth the effort.

DIRECTIONS

TO REACH THIS TRAILHEAD, travel 8 miles east from the junction of Hwy. 243 and Hwy. 74, staying on Hwy. 74 until you see the trailhead sign to your right. From Palm Desert, take Hwy. 74 south almost 28 miles and look for the trail sign to your left indicating Thomas Mountain.

Access the trail by walking along the trail south of the fence and parking area, then taking the trail behind the trail sign as it begins its switchback up the mountain. As is common in these mountains, you will hike through thick growths of manzanita, ribbonwood, and sage. Manzanita is the smooth bush with dark red bark that is often mistaken for ribbonwood, which has ribbonlike bark hanging as streamers. The valley and mountain views are panoramic!

After almost 3 miles, you will arrive at Tool Box Spring, where a dirt road joins with the trail. Continue for another 1.5 miles west along the mountain ridge to a junction where you can turn left for the 0.5-mile ascent of Thomas Mountain.



Cattle round-up, Garner Valley Ranch

The views at the top are of Anza Valley to the south and the San Jacinto Mountains to the north, with Garner Valley in between. This trail can be hot in the summer, depending on whether cool ocean breezes are blowing onshore from the Pacific.

