



# ARIZONA-SONORA DESERT MUSEUM

## PLANT CARE INFORMATION

### Velvet Mesquite or Mezquite

*Prosopis velutina*

**DESCRIPTION:** Velvet Mesquite is a wonderful, moderately fast-growing tree of the Sonoran Desert region. It can be found from washes in Saguaro forests to south-facing slopes in the lower oak zones. In great age, this long-lived tree can reach 40' tall or more, but 20' tall with a spread of 30' is more likely. Advantages of this regional mesquite over South American species are that it is stronger wooded and better rooting, with less chance of splitting or blow-down. Flowers occur in spring, with a second bloom likely with the summer rains. The bee-pollinated flowers are green and not showy. The bean pods that follow are tan, often with maroon markings, and have a sweet flavor when chewed. Ethnobotanical uses included grinding the pods, discarding the seeds, and using the remaining flour for cooking.

**RECOMMENDED USE:** It is well adapted to desert landscape, but also fits in to more intense gardens, but be sure to allow for its ultimate size. The leaves provide a good, filtered shade, but not so deep as to preclude understory plants.

#### CULTURE:



**Hardiness:** Velvet Mesquite often goes deciduous in December, but is hardy to at least 15°F.



**Sun tolerance:** Best form in full sun.



**Watering and feeding:** Water use is low to moderate when young, depending on soil texture. Irrigation frequency can be lessened in age, although it may be at the expense of growth rate. Deep, weekly irrigations when the tree is in leaf encourages the best growth.



**Soil requirements:** Plant in full sun in almost any soil.



**Pruning:** Pruning can be necessary to encourage one trunk, but a multi-trunked tree is often more picturesque. Seed pods cause some litter problem in the latter part of the growing season.