

Arid Zone Trees



Pithecellobium flexicaule *Texas Ebony*



Horticultural Qualities **Pithecellobium flexicaule** *Texas Ebony*

Foliage: Evergreen
Mature Height: 15' - 30'
Mature Width: 15' - 20'
Growth Rate: Slow
Hardiness: 20 degrees F
Exposure: Full Sun
Leaf Color: Dark Green
Shade: Filtered
Flower Color: White or Yellow
Flower Shape: Flower Spike
Flower Season: Spring to Summer
Thorns: Yes
Box Sizes Produced: 24"
Propagation Method: Seed



www.aridzonetrees.com

Arid Zone Trees, P. O. Box 167, Queen Creek, AZ 85242, Phone 480-987-9094 e-mail: info@aridzonetrees.com

Pithecellobium flexicaule

Texas Ebony

A respected desert landscape designer once quipped that **Texas Ebony** trees were too green to be a desert tree. Due in part to a slow growth rate and chronic lack of saleable trees, Texas Ebony (***Pithecellobium flexicaule***) is among the most under-utilized and under appreciated arid landscape tree. The common name itself is a misnomer since the wood is dark mahogany to purple or brown, not black. The trees are highly drought tolerant, slow growing and are moderately cold hardy to 25 F and may be damaged or killed below 20 F. Leaves are made-up of clusters of shiny, dark green leaflets. Branches are highly spined and zig-zag at each node. Branching is usually dense resulting in a thick canopy that casts dense shade. This combination of thorns and dense branching makes Texas Ebony ideal for security screen plantings. It is also used as an accent tree with its striking dark green leaf color, smoky grey bark and semi deciduous growth habit. The tree prefers well drained soils and full sun. Young trees require pruning to insure that they will mature with desirable shape. Clusters of fragrant yellow or white flowers are produced from May to October with 4 to 6 inch seed pods maturing within 30 days. Pods split open naturally to release most seeds. Reports suggest that Texas Ebony can grow to 15 to 30 feet.

Cultural Practices

Foster the development of a more dispersed root system and reduce the risk of wind throw by arranging irrigation emitters at varying distances from the trunk to encourage roots to "seek out" water and nutrients. Irrigation emitter arrangement along with other information on irrigations practices for desert trees can be found at www.aridzonetrees.com and click on the FAQ link.

Prune as needed to reinforce the structure and form of the tree. Periodic thinning is the most desirable method of pruning. Avoid hedging or heading back desert species, as this will only stimulate excessive branching. Do not remove more than 30% of the canopy during the summer as this can lead to sunburn injuries that can later be invaded by wood boring insects. Always use clean, sharp tools that are cleaned regularly in a 10% solution of bleach. For detail pruning guide see www.aridzonetrees.com and click on the FAQ interactive button.

Periodically insect pests can be a problem on some desert trees. On young trees, insect infestation can slow typical seasonal growth. Inspect trees during the growing season for common garden sucking insects such as aphids, thrip, whiteflies or psyllids. During dry months, (May and June) in dusty conditions, spider mites can appear. Monitor for infestation and apply controls as needed. Spray applications of water or water and Safer Soap give short-term control (3 to 7 days) for small insect population. For heavy infestation or longer control use federally registered insecticides. A contact insecticide application will kill existing adults. An application with a systemic soil drench will provide 8 to 12 weeks control for any post application insect hatchings or migration of insects. Before using pesticide for the first time or on new plants or cultivar, treat a few plants and check for phytotoxicity. **Always read label and follow label instruction before using pesticides. For pesticide control recommendations contact a licensed pest control advisor.**

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