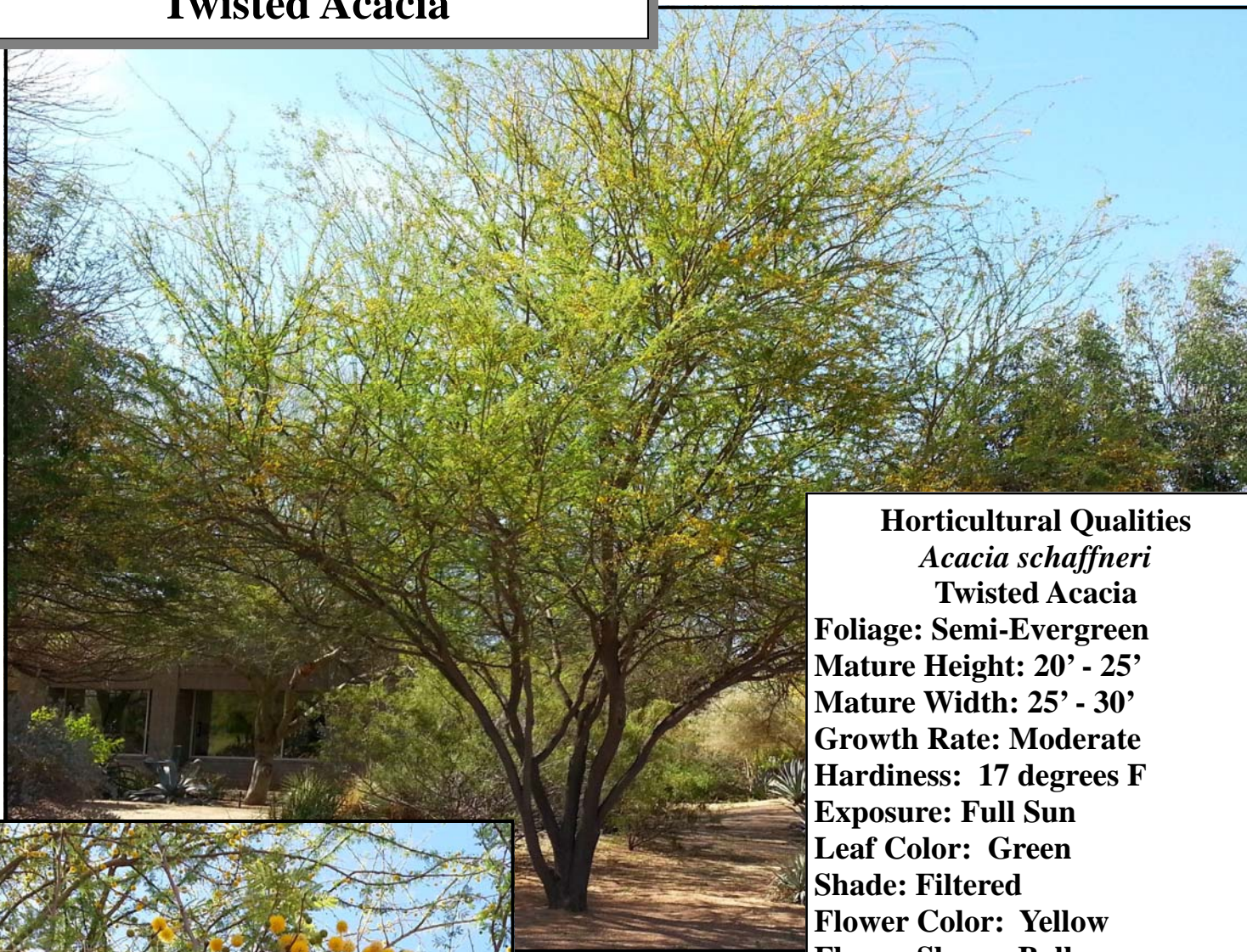


# Arid Zone Trees



*Acacia schaffneri*  
Twisted Acacia



## Horticultural Qualities

### *Acacia schaffneri* Twisted Acacia

**Foliage:** Semi-Evergreen  
**Mature Height:** 20' - 25'  
**Mature Width:** 25' - 30'  
**Growth Rate:** Moderate  
**Hardiness:** 17 degrees F  
**Exposure:** Full Sun  
**Leaf Color:** Green  
**Shade:** Filtered  
**Flower Color:** Yellow  
**Flower Shape:** Ball  
**Flower Season:** Spring  
**Thorns:** Yes  
**Propagation Method:** Clone/  
Seed  
**Sizes Available:** 25 gallon

[www.aridzonetrees.com](http://www.aridzonetrees.com)

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## *Acacia schaffneri* Twisted Acacia



Twisted Acacia is native to the Chihuahuan desert of southern Texas and northern Mexico. Along with the common name Twisted Acacia; *A. schaffneri* is sometimes called Wheat's Acacia acknowledging the introduction of this specie to the southwest by renowned Phoenix landscape architect Jim Wheat. Its botanical name is derived from Wilhelm Schaffner, a German dentist and botanist who settled in Mexico City in 1856. The finely divided leaves of this tree are set close together on short petioles that originate, densely all along the branches. As a result of this unique leaf habit, the gnarled and twisted branches appear fuzzy and lacy green, beginning in early spring. The dense layer of leaves/leaflets obscure small, numerous thorns that grow along the branches, making them nearly invisible. Branches overlap and interweave to create an unusual, graceful branch canopy. Care, patience and seasonal pruning are needed to produce mature specimens that exhibit the sculptural, twisted branches that give this tree its unique charm. They can be grown as single, low

breaking or multiple trunk forms, with the low break and multiple being the most commonly used.

It has a moderate growth rate and in spring produces bright, sulfur yellow, ball shaped flowers, borne singly or in clusters, densely packed along the branches (in a fashion similar to the leaves). Flowers are mildly fragrant. Young trees will require pruning to achieve desired form. Once the mature form is established, little additional pruning is needed. With proper water, in a sandy loam soil, trees mature to 20' to 25' tall and as wide with trunk calipers exceeding 12" in diameter in mature specimens. Twisted Acacia tolerates a wide range of soil types, thrives in full sun and is hardy to 17 F.

The unorthodox leaf canopy and remarkable spring flower display make *A. schaffneri* an ideal focal point tree placed in a prominent place within the landscape. When used near walls, its woven branches cast intricate, lacy shadows and can be dramatically lit at night. The numerous thorns also make it an effective security barrier or perimeter planting. These trees have been used in streetscape settings, in plazas and at entry monuments.

### ***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](http://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](http://www.aridzonetrees.com) and click on the FAQ interactive button.

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