

# Arid Zone Trees



## *Prosopis pubescens*, Screwbean Mesquite



### Horticultural Qualities

*Prosopis pubescens*

Screwbean Mesquite

**Foliage:** Deciduous

**Mature Height:** 15' - 25'

**Mature Width:** 15' - 24'

**Growth Rate:** Moderate

**Hardiness:** 0 degrees F

**Exposure:** Full Sun

**Leaf Color:** Pale Blue-Green

**Shade:** Filtered

**Flower Color:** Yellow

**Flower Shape:** Fuzzy Spike

**Flower Season:** Late Spring

**Thorns:** Yes

**Box Sizes Produced:** 24"

**Propagation Method:** Seed

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

Arid Zone Trees, P. O. Box 167, Queen Creek, AZ 85142, Phone 480-987-9094 e-mail: [info@aridzonetrees.com](mailto:info@aridzonetrees.com)

# *Prosopis pubescens*, Screwbean Mesquite

Perhaps the first thing people notice about the **Prosopis pubescens**, Screwbean Mesquite is the unusual spiral of the seed pods from which it takes its name. The tree is sometime referred to as a large shrub, but in landscape settings it regularly grows to 25' tall and as wide. Unpruned it has a shrub like growth habit with fairly dense branching. Pale to very bright yellow, 2" to 3", spike blooms are produced from May to June. Foliage is pale blue-green and made up of as many as 18 tiny leaflets. The tree grows at a moderate rate and is deciduous in winter. Screwbean are found in California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona and New Mexico at elevations up to 4000 feet. With its beautiful spring flower displays, it is an excellent accent tree or it can be used as a specimen in more elaborate landscape designs. It is also use in the landscape as a background tree with flowering shrubs. Unlike many desert natives, Screwbean cannot be naturalized to survive on rainfall alone. Supplemental summer irrigations are essential in most Southwestern desert locations. In the desert the tree is found primarily along water courses and in "bottomlands" that experience periodic flooding. The tree will tolerate lawn plantings. It is hardy to 0 degrees F (-18 C). Tornillo, which in Spanish means screw, clamp or vise, is a common name sometimes associated with Screwbean Mesquite.

**Variety 'AZT™':** Arid Zone Trees makes selections from thousands of trees propagated from seed. Only Individual trees having the most desirable physical qualities (branching habits, leaf color, leaf canopy, and flower color) and sound horticultural characteristics (rooting, cold hardiness and growth rate) are selected for further study. These trees are then cloned (vegetatively propagated) and planted at our nursery for further evaluation. Only the best of these trees are then used in our cloning production and are then designated Variety 'AZT™'. Since no one single selection of any desert tree species is best adapted to all landscape applications, we continually search for new additions to our Variety 'AZT™'.

An additional characteristic that sets 'AZT™' selection of clone and seed trees apart from the competition is the trees health vigorous root system, the result of AZT's Root Management Program. **Prosopis juliflora (velutina)** 'AZT™' is propagated and available exclusively from Arid Zone Trees.

## Cultural Practices

Wind damage and uprooting are the products of poor pruning and staking practices and improper irrigation and should not be considered as inherent, unavoidable horticultural shortcomings of Prosopis varieties. 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. Frequent watering is needed to promote good terminal growth on newly planted trees. Irrigation emitter arrangement along with other information on irrigations practices for desert trees can be found on our website at Irrigation Practices for Desert Trees.

Prune as needed to reinforce the structure and form of the tree. Periodic thinning is the most desirable method of pruning. Pruning to remove about 20% of the canopy during the growing season helps promote root development that is proportional to the shoot growth of young trees. Removing more than 20% of the canopy can inhibit rooting, lead to sunburn injuries that can later be invaded by wood boring insects, and encourage undesired regrowth made up of dense flushes of branches and leaves. Selective pruning should be used to promote the development of a symmetrical canopy with well spaced branches. Avoid hedging or heading back desert species, as this will only stimulate excessive branching. Use tree stakes only when absolutely necessary and then only briefly. Select low-breaking, upright trees as they occupy no more space than a single-trunk specimen yet retain the natural wind resistance of trees found growing native in desert settings. Always use clean, sharp tools that are cleaned regularly in a 10% solution of bleach. For detail pruning guide see on our website Pruning Desert Trees.

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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