

## Mesquite – Thorn-less Hybrid

*Prosopis 'thorn-less' hybrid mesquite*

*Prosopis chilensis* (only trade name, botanically a different tree species, do not use, but others may incorrectly refer to it as that.)

**Family:** Fabaceae

**Basic Description:** This is a hybrid species of mesquite. It is distinctive, because most mesquites have thorns and this one is thorn-less. It has a woody trunk and branches. A semi-deciduous tree that can grown 25-30 ft high and wide.



**Bloom & Fruit Description:** They will bloom in late spring and early summer. The flower is creamy-white to yellowish-green and fragrant. Seed pods are tough and leathery and do not split open at maturity which allows foragers to consume the seed with the pods.

**Cultural information/Uses/Human Interaction:** This hybrid was introduced in the 1950s, and is sometimes cross referenced with Chilean mesquite, but they have evolved into two different species. They thrive in drought periods when other plants are suppressed. If the tree age is less than 2-3 years old, it can be killed by fire, but older trees will survive and re-sprout above the burned tissue. This allows them to compete effectively in the brush areas.

**Distribution/Range/Habitat:** Naturally occurring mesquite ranges include the U.S. in AZ, CA, TX, NM, OK, KS, LA, Mexico, S. America, N. Africa and Asia. There is wide distribution due to human cultivation. Density increases have occurred since the late 1900s due to suppression of natural fires, human cultivation, and dissemination of seed from herds.

**Cultural Requirements:** Seeds can remain viable for as long as 10 years. It requires very little water. If watershed is accessible, mesquites can absorb up to 20 gallons per day. It's cold hardy to 15°F.

**Propagation:** Can be grown by seed collected late summer/early fall, cuttings or transplants. Seed pre-treatment is not necessary, but scarification will help quicken germination.

**Wildlife/Plant relationships:** Visited by mammals, birds, insects especially honey producing bees. The high sugar content of the pods attracts foragers which spread the seed for germination elsewhere. They will be eaten by cattle, deer, coyote, javelina, feral hogs, rodents and rabbits.

**Disease/Pathology/toxins:** Very few pests, but susceptible to **borers** if over-watering weakens the tree.

**Status:** X

### Resources:

Texas A&M

Arid Zone Trees

Howard Garrett/Dirt Doctor