

Velvet Mesquite (*Prosopis velutina*)



UA Cooperative Extension, Pima County
Master Gardeners



RANGE: Central and southern Arizona, extreme southwestern New Mexico, and adjacent northern Mexico below 5,000 feet.

FORM: Large shrub or small tree with spreading crown. May be single-stemmed and up to 50 feet tall or grow as an erect, multi-stemmed shrub.

LEAVES: Alternate and bi-pinnately compound; usually about 6 inches long. Each leaflet has **15 to 20 pairs of minor leaflets**, less than one half inch long. **Finely fuzzy surface**; dull green above, and paler below. Deciduous in the winter.



FLOWERS: 2—3 inch **catkin-like inflorescences of pale yellow flowers**; late spring to early summer.

FRUITS: **Straight or slightly curved tan pods** 3—7 inches long; solitary or clustered, ripen mid to late summer and drop in the fall.

TWIGS: Light brown and velvety, slightly zig-zagged with **paired slender spines at the base of each leaf**. Bark on young stems can be greenish.

BARK: **Dark brown, rough and shreddy, sometimes gnarled and twisted**. Newer bark can be reddish brown.



Screwbean Mesquite (*Prosopis pubescens*)



RANGE: Riparian areas of the Sonoran and Chihuahuan deserts.

FORM: Single or multistemmed small tree or shrub; sometimes forms thickets. Several crooked and arching stems form a broad round crown.

LEAVES: Deciduous, alternate, and bipinnately compound, 1 to 2 inches long, usually with only two major leaflets. *Each leaflet with 6 to 9 pairs of narrow minor leaflets* (1/2 to 1 inch long). Entire margins and a *fuzzy surface*, green to gray-green above, paler below.

FLOWERS: Pale yellow pendulous yellow spikes in groups of 2 to 6, appearing late spring to early summer.

FRUIT: : *A very unique, tightly coiled pod, 1 to 2 inches long, light brown, ripening in mid to late summer.*

TWIG: Paired whitish spines (up to 1 inch long) at the base of each leaf; knobby spur branches may also be present.

Photos this page courtesy of UA Cooperative Extension, Pima County Master Gardeners

Honey Mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*)



RANGE: Native only to the southwestern US and northern Mexico, this tree has been introduced to at least a half-dozen other countries. The World Conservation Union considers it as one of the world's 100 worst invasive species.

This species is not native to the Tucson basin and hybridizes easily.

FORM: Thorny shrub or small tree (up to 25 feet) that sometimes forms thickets.

LEAVES: Deciduous. Alternate, bipinnately compound, 3 to 6 inches long, usually with only two major leaflets (may occasionally have 2 to 3 pairs), *each leaflet with 10 to 16 pairs of narrow minor leaflets* (3/8 to 1 inch long) with entire margins and *smooth surfaces (no hairs)*, green to gray green, above, paler below.

FLOWERS: Small pale yellow to yellow-green in 2 to 3 inch long slender racemes in clusters of 2 to 6, appearing in late spring to early summer.

FRUIT: Pod is tubular and flattened, straight, or curved. Light brown and *slightly swollen at seeds*.

TWIG: Light brown, slightly zigzag with obvious slender, spines (up to 1 inch long) at the base of each leaf, single or paired; knobby spur branches may also be present.

BARK: Very distinct, rough shreddy to scaly, outer older bark gray-brown, newer bark reddish brown.



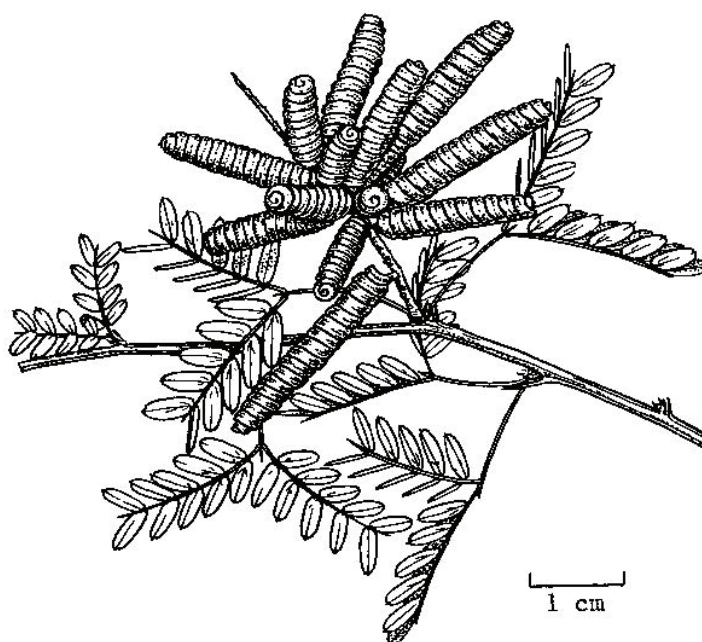
COMPARE TO CALIFORNIA PEPPER TREE

Photos this page courtesy of www.wikipedia.org

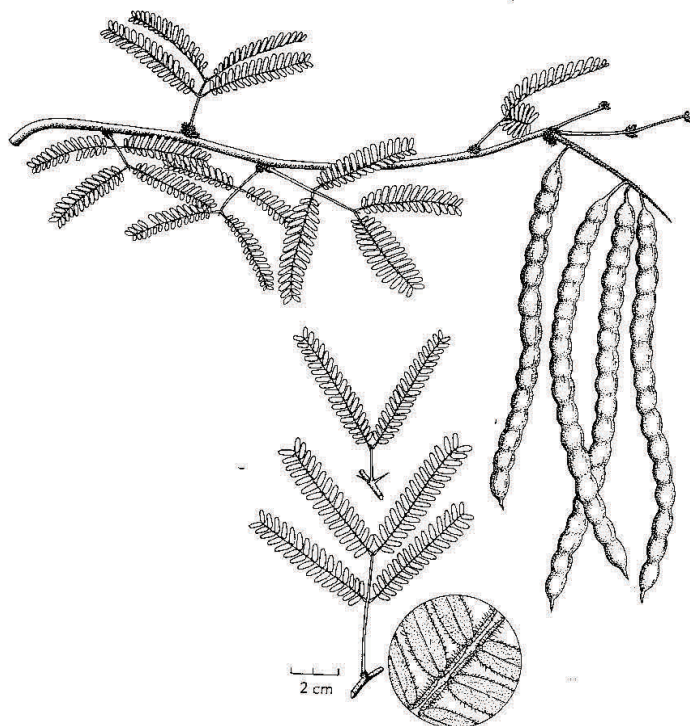
Is this a **NATIVE** or **NON-NATIVE** Mesquite?:

NATIVE MESQUITES			NON-NATIVE MESQUITES	
	VELVET	SCREWBEAN	HONEY	SOUTH AMERICAN / HYBRIDS
Number of minor leaflets	15 - 20 pairs	6 - 9 pairs	10 - 16 pairs	varies
Hairy leaflets?	YES		NO	
Leaflet spacing	close	intermediate	wide	varies
Pods	straight or slightly curved	tightly coiled	flattened, straight, or curved	varies, with a tendency toward wider, flattened pods
Mature bark	Dark gray-brown, rough and shreddy	Dark gray-brown, shreds in long stringy pieces	Rough with shreds or scales; older bark is gray-brown, newer bark is reddish	Dark brown

Screwbean mesquite (*Prosopis pubescens*)



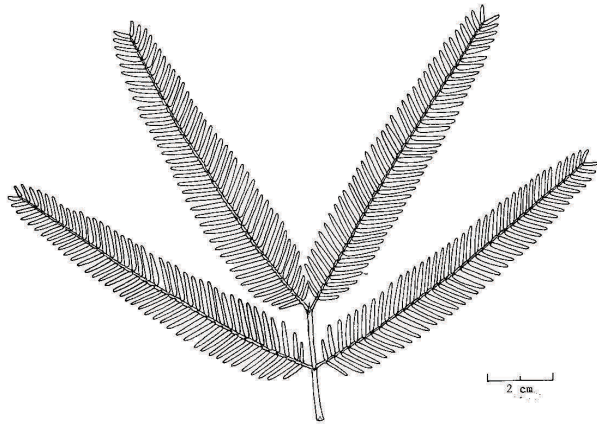
Velvet mesquite (*Prosopis velutina*)



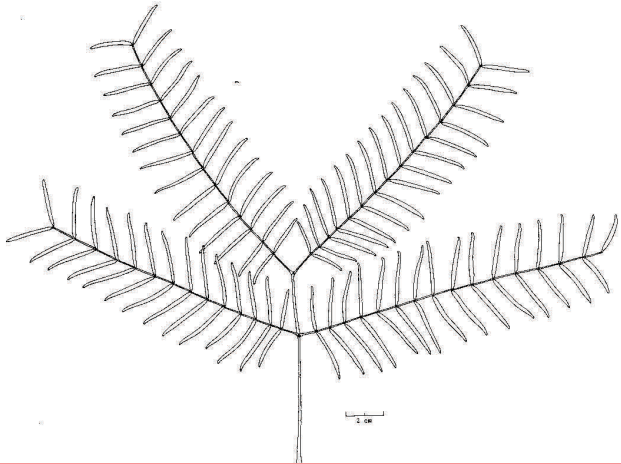
Line Drawings courtesy of Matt Johnson, UA Desert Legume Program

LEAVES OF SOME NON-NATIVE MESQUITES

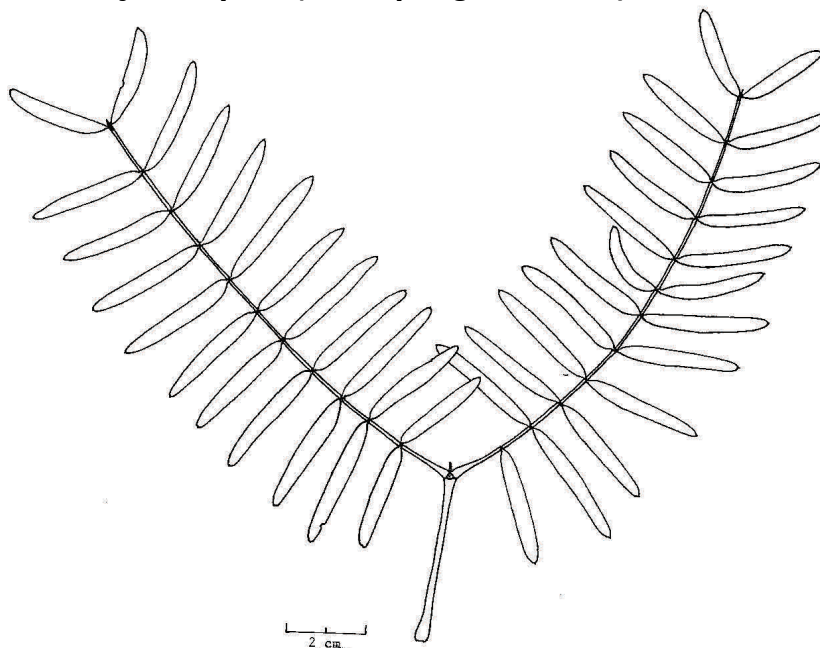
Argentine mesquite (*Prosopis alba*)



Chilean mesquite (*Prosopis chilensis*)



Honey mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*)



REMEMBER: Leaflets are variable, especially with hybridization, but non-native mesquites do not have hairs on their leaflets!

Line Drawings courtesy of Matt Johnson, UA Desert Legume Program