

Prosopis chilensis

Mimosoideae

Argentina, Chile, Mexico, Texas

- Common names: Eng: mesquite.
- Ecology: A small tree native to North and South America from Argentina and Chile to Mexico and Texas, 0-3,000 m. It grows in a wide range of soils, including gravelly or rocky sands. Its climatic range is dry plateau. It tolerates some waterlogging but is sensitive to weed competition.
- Uses: Firewood, charcoal, timber, poles, posts, food (fruit), fodder (leaves and pods), bee forage, shade, ornamental, nitrogen fixation, soil conservation, soil improvement, tannin, gum. live fence.
- Description: A fairly small tree or shrub, 8-15 m, light, drooping foliage. BARK: grey, cracked. LEAVES: alternate, compound, about 1 cm, oblong, tip pointed. FLOWERS: greenish-yellow spikes. FRUIT: about 10 cm long pods, yellow when ripe. becoming black, numerous, up to 25 seeds within a sweet pulp.
- Propagation: Seedlings, direct sowing.
- Seed info.: No. of seeds per kg: 32,000. Germination 30-90% in **10-30** days. Seeds can be extracted by exposing pods to termites. Sun dry pods, cut in pieces, then soak for 24 hours, crush and extract seed, dry in the sun.
- treatment: nick the seed or soak in cold water for 24 hours.
- storage: seed stores well both in pods and when extracted as it is not attacked by insects.
- Management: Fairly fast growing; coppicing.
- Remarks: The tree can become a weed in wetter areas. Pods contains much sugar and are excellent animal feed, sometimes ground to a powder concentrate.

