

Prosopis juliflora

Mimosoidecu

Central America, Mexico

Common names:	Eng: algarroba, mesquite.
Ecology:	A thorny shrub or tree cultivated all over the tropics Grows well in arid areas producing deep roots and tolerating extreme heat in sandy, rocky or poor and saline soils, 0-1,500 m. Soils must be well drained.
Uses:	Firewood, charcoal, timber, poles, posts, carvings, food (leaves, pods), fodder (leaves, pods), bee forage, medicine, nitrogen fixation, soil conservation, windbreak, live fence.
Description:	Often a shrub but can become a shapely tree to 15 m, the bole short, young branches green. BARK: thick, rough green-grey, scaly with age, some with pairs of thorns to 5 cm. LEAVES: compound, stalks to 6 cm, with 2-3 pairs of pinnae and 8-15 pairs of leaflets; leaflets oblong narrow, 1^5 cm long, no terminal leaflet. FLOWERS: gold-yellow, densely crowded in spikes 5-10 cm, fragrant. FRUIT: yellow pod, 10-20 cm, Hard seeds difficult to extract from pod.
Propagation:	Seedlings, direct sowing.
Seed info.:	No. of seeds per kg: 30,000-35,000. Germination rate 40%-80%. Seeds can be extracted by exposing pods to termites, or cut dry pods into pieces, soak overnight, extract mechanically, dry in the sun, pound in a mortar then winnow to separate the chaff.
treatment:	nick seed coat with a knife to improve germination.
storage:	the seeds store well both in pods and when extracted as they are not attacked by insects.
Management:	Fairly fast growing; lopping, pollarding and coppicing.
Remarks:	The tree may become a weed on wetter sites. It sets seed after 3-4 years. The sweet pod contains both glucose and protein, making valuable fodder. The dense hard wood burns with great heat.

