

Syrian Mesquite, *yanbut*

GENERAL

Origin	: Mediterranean, sub-tropical
Vigour	: slow-growing
Humidity	: extremely arid, very arid, semi-arid, semi-humid, very humid
Propagation	: sowing and pricking out, cuttings
Maintenance	: low

CONDITIONS

Urban climate	: resistant
Dessication	: resistant
Stagnant water	: vulnerable
Irrigation	: none
Salinity/ppm	: very high (20000 ppm)
Hardiness	: -6°C

SHAPE

Type	: shrub
Height	: 0.4 m-2 m
Spread	: 0.6 m-3 m
Foliage	: deciduous

FLOWER

Colour	: green, yellow
Size	: 3 cm - 10 cm
Period	: April - August

FRUIT

Type of fruit	: pod
Fruit size	: 5 cm - 4 cm
Toxicity	: edible when processed

This low, perennial shrub, sometimes referred to as Syrian Mesquite and known locally as *yanbut*, has a wide range of habitats all over the Middle East through to India on sandy plains, disturbed ground, fallow fields, borders of springs, and along farm fences and canal banks. Seen throughout the Arriyadh region, it forms straggly, prostrate bushes, primarily on wasteland. The spiny, older stems become grey, almost white in colour. Multi-branched up to 2 metres high, it has alternate, compound, bipinnate leaves and small, white glabrous flowers in spikes up to 10 cm long from April to August. The striking legumes are oval, kidney-shaped, dark-chestnut-like pods, swollen to 5 cm in length. Sometimes a striking orange, they become almost black, like a lump of charcoal, when ripe. *P. farcta* will grow in salty and non-salty habitats on poor and good soils, and is very drought-tolerant. Propagation is by seed and cuttings. Normally, plants will be browsed only by goats. Although the Syrian Mesquite has been classified as a noxious weed in some countries – it is even widespread in Arizona – it has some merit as a native plant in sand stabilisation schemes and afforestation in the first row. In extensive landscape designs, no maintenance at all will be necessary.

