

Common Mesquite, Arizona Mesquite, Velvet Mesquite, ghaf bahri

The Common Mesquite, known as ghaf bahri in Arabic, has its origins in tropical America, and most probably ‘invaded’ Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states during the late 1950s (CE) from Indo-Pakistan. Mesquite has a loose, spreading crown of twigs and fern-like foliage on a short trunk with rough, dark-brown bark. A fast-growing, deciduous tree up to 7 metres tall and 10 metres wide, armed with pairs of spines, it has alternate, bipinnate, dull-green, and in spring bright-green, leaves. The drooping, creamy-white flower tassels up to 10 cm long appear in mid-spring. The slightly curved pods are up to 12 cm long, and are brown when ripe. *P. juliflora* grows in sandy and silty soil and has long invasive roots; it tolerates a high water table as well as inundation and extreme salinity. It requires full sun and is frost-tolerant, but the foliage will suffer considerably after very sharp frosts. Although extremely drought-tolerant, it grows very slowly without water: occasional deep irrigation promotes better growth. Propagation is by seeds, root suckers, and hardwood cuttings. An invasive species keeping down indigenous grass and shrubs, the Mesquite is not usually browsed. More attractive as a multi-trunked tree, good staking and frequent pruning of a straight strong leader are necessary for a tall standard. A dripping dark fluid can stain paving, while some people are allergic to the pollen. Leaf and pod litter is a problem. Trees are very suitable for afforestation, soil erosion control, stabilisation of sand dunes, and soil improvement.



**GENERAL**

Origin	: Mediterranean, sub-tropical
Vigour	: normal growth rate
Humidity	: extremely arid, very arid, semi-arid, semi-humid, very humid
Propagation	: sowing and pricking out, cuttings
Maintenance	: moderate

**CONDITIONS**

Urban climate	: resistant
Dessication	: resistant
Stagnant water	: resistant
Irrigation	: low
Salinity/ppm	: very high (30000 ppm)
Hardiness	: -18°C

**SHAPE**

Type	: tree
Height	: 5 m-15 m
Spread	: 6 m-12 m
Foliage	: semi-evergreen

**FLOWER**

Colour	: pale yellow
Size	: 6 cm - 10 cm
Period	: March - June

**FRUIT**

Type of fruit	: pod
Fruit size	: 12 cm - 25 cm
Toxicity	: edible when processed