

XERISCAPE NATURE'S CHOICE OF LANDSCAPE



Ebenopsis ebano (Texas Ebony) - (formerly *Pithecellobium flexicaule*)

Texas ebony is native to the lowland regions of the Gulf of Mexico from southern Texas to north-eastern Mexico. The highly ornamental, glossy, dark green foliage is its most striking feature. This popular small to medium tree has flexible, zigzagged branches, and fragrant catkin-like spring flowers. The dense canopy is evergreen in lower desert regions.

Texas ebony is slow-growing, reaching 25 feet tall and 20 feet wide. This versatile tree is valued for both its specimen quality in patios and gardens, or as a screen or barrier plant. The thorns provide security where needed. When used for patios and gardens, its thorns must be taken into account in its placement. With careful pruning, the canopy can be raised to form a patio tree. Its fragrant cream-colored flowers appear in spring and are followed by brown, woody pods 4 to 6 inches long that can remain on the tree for up to a year. These pods create some ground litter, but are easily picked up and can be used in dry flower arrangements for unique texture and durability. This sun-loving tree prefers well-drained soils, deep, infrequent waterings, and is very drought tolerant. It should be planted only in areas where the winter temperatures do not dip below 15 degrees F, as tip burn and possible die back can occur.

Two other closely related trees that are becoming more widely available are Mexican ebony (*Harvardia mexicanum*) and Tenaza (*Harvardia pallens*). While similar to Texas ebony, Mexican ebony is a deciduous tree that produces filtered shade and grows to 25 feet tall and 20 feet wide, with gray-green foliage and a smooth chalky gray trunk which develops fissures and becomes darker with age. *Harvardia mexicanum* grows quickly while young, and then at a moderate rate as it matures.

Harvardia pallens is semi-deciduous in winter and provides light shade in summer. Its delicate light green foliage and upright growth habit make it perfect for narrow spaces. Small thorns are present on juvenile trees, but as they mature the branches are nearly thornless. The tropical appearance, form and fast growth rate distinguish it from other species. It reaches a maximum size of 30 feet high by 25 feet wide.