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## WINTER HOURS

7:00 am to 4:30 pm Office  
7:00 am to 3:30 pm Yard/Will Call  
Open Monday through Friday  
Closed Weekends and Major Holidays

## UPCOMING EVENTS / NOTICES

### January 6 Annual Pruning Seminar for Landscape Professionals

University of Nevada, Las Vegas,  
sponsored by the Nevada  
Cooperative Extension.  
English and Spanish sessions. No  
fee, but registration is required.  
Info: Contact Karen Dyka at  
702.222.3130.

**January 17-20  
Idaho Horticulture Expo**  
Boise Center on the Grove, Boise,  
ID. Sponsored by the Idaho  
Nursery & Landscape Association.

Info: Contact INLA at 800.462.4769  
or email: [abates@inlagrow.org](mailto:abates@inlagrow.org)

### January 23-25 Utah Green Conference & Trade Show

South Towne Centre, Sandy, UT.  
Sponsored by the Utah Nursery  
& Landscape Association.  
Info: Contact Diane Jones at  
801.484.4426 or e-mail  
[unla@aol.com](mailto:unla@aol.com)

**January 23-27  
2006 ProGreen Expo**  
Colorado Convention Center  
in Denver, CO.

Info: Visit the ProGreen website at  
<http://www.progreenexpo.com>  
or contact ProGreen Expo at  
800.397.6665 or e-mail  
[info@progreenexpo.com](mailto:info@progreenexpo.com)

### January 26-27 Colorado River Horticultural Conference

Nautical Inn, Lake Havasu City, AZ  
Info: Contact Vicki Coombs @  
928.753.3788 or HYPERLINK  
"mailto:vaccoombs@ag.arizona.edu"  
[vaccoombs@ag.arizona.edu](mailto:vaccoombs@ag.arizona.edu)

**January 26-27  
Think Trees New Mexico**  
Crowne Plaza Hotel, Albuquerque,  
NM. Info: Contact Bernalillo County  
Cooperative Education office at  
505.243.1386

### February 10 Turf Removal & Landscape

**Conversions...The Right  
Way** Lindell Building,  
2590 Lindell Road, Las Vegas, NV.  
Conducted by the Southern Nevada  
Arborist Group (SNAG) Info: Contact  
Jim Rosaschi at 702.361.3322 or  
visit <http://www.lvsnag.org>

### February 14 16th Annual Nevada Landscape Association (NLA) Trade Show & Conference

Reno Hilton, Reno, NV.  
Info: Contact Debra Rae Drew at  
775.673.0404.

### February 15-16 Landscape Industry Show

Los Angeles Convention Center. Los  
Angeles, CA. Sponsored by the  
California Landscape Contractors  
Association. Info: Call 916.830.2780  
or visit <http://www.clca.us/lis.html>

## SMALL TREES FOR POSTAGE STAMP LANDSCAPES

With few exceptions, most residential landscapes in urban areas are shrinking. One acre lots are still available, but they have a premium that is out of reach for the vast majority. The foot print of the dwelling often takes up nearly the entire tiny plot leaving little room for trees and shrubs. Those who choose to plant trees with the potential to become quite large must deal with invasive roots and frequent pruning to maintain balance. There is an easy solution...plant smaller trees.

In fact, there are many tree species of small stature with a wide selection of environmental tolerances. There are evergreen or deciduous trees, thorny trees that double as barriers to home invasion and, as an added bonus, many have spectacular flowers.

The trees within this article will rarely exceed 20 feet in height which keeps them in scale with the typical single story residence. Most can be easily pruned from the ground or if need be, from a short ladder. Many of the larger shrubs of the southwest can be trained into small trees as well creating great interest in the landscape.

### EVERGREEN TREES

#### *Acacia aneura*...Mulga tree

This Australian native is a thornless tree with leathery, narrow, gray to silver leaf-like phyllodes. Extremely drought tolerant it is ideal for full and reflected sun locations. Mulga does not like to be over-watered and should receive deep, widely spaced irrigation. It has the potential to become nearly as wide as it is tall (18 feet) but the Mulga may be trimmed to be kept more narrow if desired. Small, yellow rod-shaped flowers are produced during the summer. It is hardy to 15°F.

#### *Caesalpinia cacalaco*...Casalote

This large shrub may be easily trained into a small, multi-trunked patio tree. Native to tropical Mexico it is virtually evergreen unless there is a cold snap. The glossy, compound leaves are a dark, rich green. Rose-like thorns adorn the branches. Casalote blooms during the winter months with large spikes of clear yellow flowers produced on the branch tips. Hardy to 20°F it may receive damage to flowers and foliage if the temperatures fall into the teens, but recovery is usually quite rapid.

#### *Caesalpinia cacalaco Smoothie*™

This new introduction from Mountain States has all the traits of the species but without the thorns. It is a great winter flowering tree for use in patios and common areas.

#### *Cordia boissieri*...Texas Olive

This small tree is native to an area from southern Texas into Mexico where it is known as Anacahuita. The large deep green leaves are coarse, leathery and mostly evergreen in mild winters. Two inch diameter white flowers with a yellow throat are borne in clusters from spring through fall. The fruit is small, whitish-green somewhat resembling an olive, hence the name. The sweet fruit is edible, but not palatable. Abundant flower and seed litter should be expected. Plants thrive in full sun and reflected heat locations. With freezing temps, the tree can be untidy looking as the foliage and small twigs can freeze and do not abscise. Hardy to 20°F it is placed in USDA Zone 9. This large shrub or small tree may exceed 20 feet in height dependent on the irrigation provided.

#### *Fraxinus greggii*...Little Leaf Ash

Native to west Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona this versatile plant can either be used as a large shrub, or shaped into a small, multi-trunked tree. At maturity, it may reach a height of 15 feet, with a 10 to 15 foot spread. The bright green, fine-textured foliage looks good all year, and contrasts nicely with the smooth gray bark. In the spring, old leaves are shed as new ones develop, but the tree never goes completely bare. Little leaf ash is a very clean and trouble-free plant. Inconspicuous flowers are followed by winged fruit. Little leaf ash should be placed in full sun or part shade and well-drained soil. It grows faster with ample summer irrigation, but can handle drought conditions as well. It is hardy to 10°F.

#### *Sophora secundiflora*...

##### Texas Mountain Laurel

Indigenous to Texas, New Mexico and Mexico, this large shrub or small tree is evergreen, completely thornless, slow-growing and long-lived. The dark green, glossy, compound leaves provide a lush look for desert gardens. Showy clusters of dark purple, wisteria-like flowers are produced in the spring producing a heady perfume that is reminiscent of grape bubble-gum. Thick seed pods contain bright orange-red seeds that are poisonous, but the pods are extremely hard and difficult to open. Texas mountain laurel should be planted in full sun and well-drained soils. Most specimens will be 15 feet tall or less. It is hardy to 10°F.

#### *Sophora secundiflora* 'Silver Peso'

This selection of the Texas mountain laurel is a silver-leaved form of the species with all the wonderful qualities of the plant described previously. The purple flowers are striking against the silver foliage.

## SEMI-EVERGREEN TREES

Some trees drop their leaves if the conditions warrant. This may be due to cold, drought or other environmental stress. Otherwise they remain fairly evergreen.

### *Acacia rigidula*...Blackbrush Acacia

This slow growing native to the Chihuahuan desert is a large shrub or small, multi-trunked tree that tops out at about 15 feet. It has dark green, glossy leaves and very sharp, small spines along the branches. Yellow, rod-shaped flowers are produced in the spring. It is extremely drought tolerant but has been known to adapt well to lawn settings. It thrives in full or reflected sun exposures. It is hardy to 15°F.

### *Acacia schaffneri*...Twisted Acacia

Native to southern Texas and Mexico, this tree produces twisted, arching branches that create a truly unique silhouette. The small, bright green, compound leaves have a fern-like appearance. Bright yellow puffball flowers adorn the branches in the spring. Sharp thorns make this a formidable barrier tree. It may be trained into a very sculptural small tree to a height of 20 feet. It prefers placement in sites with full sun and good drainage. It is hardy to 15°F.

### *Bauhinia lunarioides*...Anacacho Orchid Tree

This airy large shrub or small tree is native to west Texas and Mexico, and was once known as *Bauhinia congesta*. It has bi-lobed, green leaves that are shaped like butterflies. Small, delicate five-petaled flowers are produced from late spring to early summer. There are selections with white or pink flowers. It is tolerant of sun and drought, but will handle part-shade and ample moisture as well. Slow growing, it may eventually achieve a height of 12 feet. It is hardy to about 10°F.

### *Bauhinia mexicana*...Mexican Orchid Tree

This large shrub or small tree varies in size from 10 to 18 feet tall. It is adorned with delicate white flowers that fade to pink. It has a long bloom cycle from mid-summer until late fall. The bright green leaves have a cleft at the tip. It should be planted in full sun to part shade and provided moderate irrigation for best growth. It is said to be more salt tolerant than other Bauhinia species. It is hardy to about 15°F.

### *Caesalpinia paraguariensis*...Guayacan

Known affectionately as the Tranquility Tree in the nursery it has many endearing qualities. This upright, woody tree is native to semi-arid regions of South America. It is usually evergreen in milder climates, with doubly compound leaves that emerge as a rust color, gradually turning green. It also has incredible mottled bark, with shades of green, beige, gray and brown flecking off in patches. Sparse clusters of small yellow flowers are produced in the spring and summer, followed by thick, woody seedpods that turn from brown to black. Mature size is variable as specimens may reach 15 or more feet in height and width. Hardy to 18°F it is placed in USDA Zone 8.

### *Ebenopsis ebano*...Texas Ebony

This native of the Rio Grande plains of south Texas is a victim of recent changes in botanical taxonomy.You may have known this tree by the name *Pithecellobium flexicaule*. This mostly evergreen small tree has dark, glossy green compound leaves arranged along thorny branches that have a distinctive zigzag pattern. Clusters of creamy yellow, fragrant flowers are produced from May to October followed by large, decorative woody pods. This plant may exceed 20 feet if conditions are favorable. It is hardy to 10°F.

### *Eysenhardtia orthocarpa*...Kidneywood

Kidneywood is a large shrub or small tree that can reach a mature size of 20 feet tall by 12 feet wide. This plant is normally deciduous, but can be semi-evergreen in mild climates. Colored walls provide an effective backdrop for this wispy tree. Also, consider planting them in small groves for more impact. Tiny white fragrant flowers occur in terminal spikes throughout the summer. This Arizona native is tolerant of sun, reflected heat, drought, poor soils, and cold. Butterflies, wasps, and bees are attracted to the flowers for the nectar, and the foliage is larval food. It is very hardy to 0°F.

## DECIDUOUS TREES

### *Acacia farnesiana*...Sweet Acacia

Also known as *Acacia smallii* or *minuta*, sweet acacia lives up to its common name by perfuming the spring air with masses of fragrant yellow-orange puffball flowers. This tree is extremely tough, and will grow in almost any situation, from hot parking lots to turf areas. Its fast growth rate and attractive vase-shaped form make it a popular choice for desert landscapes. However, be aware that this tree is quite messy, and requires some maintenance. Sweet acacia really wants to be a big bush, producing many thorny suckers at the base. Removal of these suckers, as well as selective pruning, is required to develop an upright tree form. Sweet acacia should be kept away from swimming pools, as its plump, dark brown seed pods can create quite a bit of litter. Although Sweet acacia is cold hardy to 10°F, it sheds most of its foliage in the winter. This plant may exceed 20 feet in height if provided ample irrigation.

### *Acacia willardiana*...Palo Blanco

A sub-tropical native of Sonora, Mexico, this plant is called white stick in Spanish due to the creamy white exfoliating bark on the trunk. It has an airy and open canopy making it ideal for under planting with perennials or succulent plants like aloes and agaves. The weeping branches have delicate, long, ferny leaves. Creamy white catkin-like flowers are produced in the spring followed by brown, papery pods. It is hardy only to about 25°F and it should be placed where it will be protected from cold winds.

### *Chilopsis linearis*...Desert Willow

Common along the dry washes throughout the Southwest, this deciduous tree usually grows in a shrubby, multi-trunked form. Older plants may eventually grow

to be 25 feet tall and as wide but in youth they tend to be much smaller. Long, narrow bright green leaves give a willowy appearance. Large orchid-like flowers provide warm season color, attracting hummingbirds and bees. The fragrant flowers range from white to dark pink. Long tan seed pods persist on the plant after flowering. Plant in full sun or part shade and provide well-drained soil. Most forms are hardy to -10°F. We have several trademarked selections:

- Art’s Seedless™ has all the desirable traits of the species but without the litter of the seedpods.

- Lucretia Hamilton™ is slightly smaller than the species bearing dark burgundy flowers.

- Warren Jones™ is typical of the species with large pink flowers and slightly less hardy at 0°F.

### *Chitalpa x tashkentensis* ‘Pink Dawn’

This fast growing hybrid of the common desert willow of the southwest and the Midwestern native Catalpa produces showy terminal clusters of large pink, orchid-like flowers from summer until fall. The leaves are slightly broader than the desert species and considerably smaller than the Catalpa. Mature trees may range from 20 to 30 feet in height and width depending on conditions. This deciduous tree is somewhat brittle and does best in protected locations. It should be planted in full sun and well-drained soil. It is hardy to 0°F.

### *Parkinsonia x ‘Desert Museum’...*

#### Desert Museum Palo Verde

This tree is a three way cross between *Parkinsonia microphylla*, *Parkinsonia florida*, and *Parkinsonia aculeata*. This fast-growing clone has an upright growth habit, and it may exceed 20 feet in height if provided ample irrigation. ‘Desert Museum’ has small, bright green, compound leaves and smooth lime green bark. "Palo verde" translates to "green stick" in Spanish, describing the green bark that carries on photosynthesis when the leaves are shed during cold or drought. Masses of yellow flowers are produced from March though May, with sporadic flowering during the summer months. ‘Desert Museum’ should be planted in full sun and well-drained soil, and in regions where temperatures do not drop below 15°F.

### *Parkinsonia microphylla*...

#### Foothill or Little Leaf Palo Verde

Foothill palo verde is slightly smaller than other palo verdes, growing slowly to 10-20 feet tall and wide. The trees leaf out following seasonal rains, but in natural settings they tend to be leafless for most of the year. Lime green stems carry on photosynthesis year ‘round. Foothill palo verde blooms after the blue palo verde, with masses of light yellow blossoms. This tree is very drought-tolerant, although supplemental watering during the dry season will speed up the growth rate. Foothill palo verde has a naturally shrubby, multi-trunked form. It is hardy to 15°F.

### *Prosopis pubescens*...Screwbean Mesquite

This thorny, deciduous small tree or large shrub is native to the southwest where in Mexico it is known as Tornillo. It produces fuzzy yellow 2 inch long catkin flowers from April to June, followed by fascinating coiled seed pods. Screwbean mesquite has a shrubby, multi-trunked form, and will require careful pruning to develop a walk-under canopy. It grows best in deep well-drained soil and full sun exposures. Although considered very drought tolerant it will accept ample water and may even tolerate growing in turf conditions. This plant is very tough and carefree, although mistletoe and scale infestations are possible. Hardy to 0°F it is placed in USDA Zone 6.

### *Sambucus nigra ssp. cerulea*...Elderberry

This tree has an extensive range from west Texas to California and well into Mexico. Often a large shrub or small tree, the normal height is 10 to 20 feet but larger specimens exist. Older trees develop gnarly, twisted trunks. The compound leaves have slightly toothed, sandpapery leaflets. Considered evergreen in milder climates, extreme drought and heat will cause the tree to defoliate to conserve water. Flattened clusters of yellowish-white blossoms occur in cooler months and blooming may continue well into spring. The edible fruit that follows is a bluish-black color and is quite tart. A favorite of many migratory birds, the seeds pass through them, resulting in seedlings wherever they roost. The trees are quite drought tolerant and will grow slowly unless provided ample water. Elderberry is not particular about soil, drainage or sun and is hardy to 0°F.

### *Ungnadia speciosa*...Mexican Buckeye

This small thornless tree will eventually reach a mature size of 15 feet by 15 feet. Lovely rose-pink flowers appear in the spring before the leaves emerge. Three-chambered seed pods follow containing dark, shiny seeds. The large dark green, compound leaves have a yellow fall color. Native to central, southern and west Texas, the buckeye will withstand heat and drought once established, but requires good drainage. It will perform in full sun partial shade. It is hardy to 0°F.

### *Vitex agnus-castus* ‘Montrose Purple’...

#### Monk’s Pepper or Chaste Tree

Originating in Europe and Asia, this long-lived and slow-growing tree has proven to be well-adapted to our deserts. Long, narrow spikes of purple flowers cover this plant in the summer months. Although the flower color can range from white to dark purple, most trees have been selected for the darker flower color. Large terminal spikes of indigo flowers set ‘Montrose Purple’ apart from variable seedlings. These fragrant flowers attract bees, butterflies and hummingbirds. Monks in southern Europe and Asia, where this tree is native, reportedly used the seeds of this plant as a substitute for pepper. Unfortunately, this tree is fairly messy, shedding all of its leaves in the fall, and dropping old flowers and seeds throughout the year. However, its aromatic green leaves and long, profuse bloom period go a long way toward making up for the litter! It may eventually exceed a height of 20 feet. Chaste tree tolerates temperatures below 0°F.