



PARKINSONIA (CERCIDIUM) HYBRID 'DESERT MUSEUM'

OUTSTANDING FEATURES: The 'Desert Museum' palo verde has several unique characteristics that set it apart from other palo verde selections. First, it has an upright growth habit that allows it to be used as a walk-under shade tree. Second, the mass of flowers produced in late spring is nearly unrivaled among desert trees. Third, its smooth, light green bark is quite attractive. Finally, the amount of shade produced and the thornless nature allow for use in a variety of situations. This thornless nature is sometimes considered the most desirable feature!

DESCRIPTION: The 'Desert Museum' palo verde is a hybrid developed by Mark Dimmitt at the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum. The plant is a result of hybridizing between *Cercidium microphyllum* and *Parkinsonia aculeata*, then with *Cercidium floridum*. All of the hybridizing resulted in about one hundred seedlings from which the best one was selected. This selected clone is a medium-sized, thornless tree with smooth green bark, and a gorgeous display of rich yellow flowers in late spring. An added bonus: the flowers are larger than those of the three "parents"! It also flowers sporadically throughout the summer when given supplemental water. This clone grows to at least 25 feet tall and wide.

CULTURE/MAINTENANCE: 'Desert Museum' is hardy to about 15 degrees F and possibly lower. One tree in El Paso showed no damage after experiencing a low of 10 degrees F. Once established, it is quite drought tolerant. However, the additional of supplemental water will help this tree to grow faster and flower more profusely. Be careful not to overwater, as the tops may become too heavy. 'Desert Museum' palo verde grows best in native soil with good drainage. It does not seem to matter if the soil is rich in organic matter. Trees of this clone will need to be shaped or thinned because of their tendency to produce many branches down low, and in the crown.



IDENTIFICATION: The combination of large (for a palo verde) flowers, thornless nature, and leaf structure set this palo verde apart from the rest.

LANDSCAPE APPLICATION: Use 'Desert Museum' palo verde as a fast-growing shade tree in all zones of a xeriscape. It looks as good in the mini-oasis as it does in the outer zone. This tree is well suited for full sun and reflected sun locations. The light shade cast by this tree makes it an ideal nurse plant for cacti and other succulents. Because it lacks thorns or spines, this clone is ideal for use in schools, parking lots, and other pedestrian areas.

PRECAUTIONS: Take care to not overwater this tree as it may grow too fast and become too heavy. If the top gets too dense and heavy, the roots may not be able to support the tree. Protect young trees from damage by rabbits, javelina, or deer. The bark and young branches may be eaten,

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causing deformation and sometimes death of the whole plant.

Also, sometimes other species of *Cercidium* can be defoliated by butterfly or moth larvae in the spring and summer. According to Mark Dimmitt, so far this hybrid has not been susceptible to this defoliation. However, plants should still be checked if any unusual defoliation occurs.

The main drawback with this particular plant is the difficulty of propagating it! 'Desert Museum' is grown from cuttings, which have been difficult to root. However, great progress had been made in this area, and availability is improving rapidly. Before specifying large quantities, you might want to call and confirm upcoming availability.



Cercidium hybrid 'Desert Museum' growing at Mountain States Wholesale Nursery in Glendale, Arizona.

AT A GLANCE SUMMARY

SIZE (HEIGHT x WIDTH)	25 feet x 25 feet
FLOWER COLOR	Bright yellow
FLOWER SEASON	Spring
EXPOSURE	Full sun, reflected heat
WATER	Low
GROWTH RATE	Fast
HARDINESS	15° F USDA 8
PRUNING	Thinning and shaping
HARDY IN THESE CITIES	Phoenix, Tucson, Palm Desert, San Diego, Los Angeles, San Antonio, South Texas, Austin

For more information, call: toll-free (800) 840-8509 or (623) 247-8509
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