

Prosopis glandulosa

[Synonyms : *Algarobia glandulosa*, *Ceratonia chilensis*, *Mimosa juliflora*, *Neltuma constricta*, *Neltuma glandulosa*, *Neltuma neomexicana*, *Prosopis chilensis*, *Prosopis chilensis* var. *glandulosa*, *Prosopis glandulosa* var. *glandulosa*, *Prosopis juliflora*, *Prosopis juliflora* var. *constricta*, *Prosopis juliflora* var. *glandulosa*, *Prosopis juliflora* var. *torreyana*, *Prosopis odorata*, *Prosopis prosopis*]

ALGARROBA is a deciduous shrub or tree (in some regions viewed as invasive). Native to Chile, south-western North America and northern Mexico it has tiny pea-like, greenish-yellow flowers.

It is also known as *Bayahonde* (French), *Bayawon'n-blan* (Creole), Common mesquite, *Devi* (Pakistani), Honey locust, Honey mesquite, Honey pod, Ironwood, Mesquite, Mesquite gum, Screwbean, Torrey mesquite, and Western honey mesquite.

Some authorities report that algaroba roots can reach down as much as 50 or 60 feet in order to find water.

The resin (similar to gum arabic, *Acacia senegal*) is harvested.

Algaroba can be extremely invasive when introduced outside its native habitat.

Glandulosa is derived from Latin *glanduli*- (gland) meaning 'glandular'.

In desert areas algaroba is a much sought after shade tree by both man and beast.

According to various authorities the fruit pods and their beans were a nutritious staple part of the diet of the North American Comanche and Yavapai Indian tribes and also of some of the Apache. The Kiowa collected the nutritious pods and beans not only to prepare them in various ways as food (in Mexico, cakes especially) but also to use them to make both a sweet beverage and a fermented drink. Bean flour was made into bread by the Isleta tribe and Keresan Indians cooked the beans as a vegetable and in the form of ground flour made them into a porridge-like mush. The beans were ground for flour by the Apache tribe (who often used this to make pancakes or serve as a sweetener in fermented drinks) – and the Apache also made the beans into a jam-like preserve. Some of the Apache tribe used the root as a flavouring for beverages. The secretions or juice in the beans was enjoyed as a sweet (or kind of confectionery) by some of the Tohono O'Odham and by the Isleta tribe.

Kiowa Indians used the leaves as fodder. The fruit pods have also been fed to livestock.

Resin provided some of the Apache Indians with the necessary glue for securing feathers to arrow shafts – and in the Isleta tribe the arrow shafts themselves were often made from small branches.

Records also suggest that a very few North American Indian tribes valued algaroba for medicinal qualities. It offered a remedy for stomach upsets in the Comanche tribe, it was used by some of the Apache for treating various urinary disorders, and the latter and the Keresan and Isleta tribes all used it for some eye problems.

One tree introduced via Paris to the Catholic mission grounds in Honolulu in 1828 gave the Hawaiians hundreds more spreading throughout the islands – often in otherwise inhospitable sites for much plant life. The leaves and fruit were used to feed livestock and from 1857 when the first honey-bees were introduced there the islanders were also able to

collect algaroba honey. By 1935 the bees were producing 200 tons annually and most of this was exported.

The very hard and heavy, dark red wood is used locally both as timber especially for fence posts and fuel, and it is also made into charcoal. The heat from this firewood is so strong that the fuel is sometimes referred to as Wooden anthracite.

The outer bark has been used for tanning and the inner bark has been used medicinally. The sap (or resin) has not only been provided a black dye but dried has also offered an adhesive for mending pottery.