

Arid Zone Trees



Acacia constricta White Thorn Acacia



Horticultural Qualities *Acacia constricta* White Thorn Acacia

Foliage: Deciduous
Mature Height: 10'-18'
Mature Width: 10' - 18'
Growth Rate: Moderate
Hardiness: 0 degrees F
Exposure: Full Sun
Leaf Color: Green
Shade: Filtered
Flower Color: Yellow
Flower Shape: Ball
Flower Season: Spring
Thorns: Yes
Box Sizes Produced: 24"
Propagation Method: Seed

www.aridzonetrees.com

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Acacia constricta

White Thorn Acacia

With its lush green foliage and conspicuous ½" long bright white thorns, *A. constricta* is a study in visual contradiction, being at once inviting and cautioning not to come too close. In summer the finely divided (4 to 16 pairs of leaflets), lush green foliage stands out against the gray to mahogany-brown bark. Thorns are borne in pairs and originate at leaf nodes along branches. Thorns are bright white and easily visible, adding to the interesting texture of the tree's canopy. Yellow-orange, fragrant, ball-shaped flowers first appear in spring and again in late summer through the fall months (depending on seasonal rains). Pods are 4" long, curved, reddish brown in color and constricted or narrow between each seed. Trees are cold hardy to 0 degrees F and are both drought and cold deciduous.

Native to Arizona, and Sonora, Mexico, it is found at elevations from 0 to 1800 feet, along washes and arroyos where runoff compensates for the lack of rainfall. In these natives setting it grows at a moderate rate to a large shrub or small tree. In its natural habitat you may find the tree unarmed. In the landscape, reports suggest a range of mature sizes from 10 to 18' tall and as wide. They can be grown in a spreading shrub form or pruned into graceful single or multiple trunk specimens. White Thorn Acacia will tolerate shallow, alkaline soils but will thrive in full sun and well-drained soils. Established trees can be naturalized to survive on annual rainfall in most desert locations but are most lush and produce more flowers if irrigated deeply once a month during spring and summer.

The Seri Indians used the leaves, mashed seeds and roots of *A. constricta* for stomach ailments, skin rashes and medicinal teas.

With a form and stature similar to *A. smallii*, White Thorn makes an excellent accent tree with its form, color and fragrant flowers. Specimens can be planted singly or in small groupings. Planting in combination with semi-evergreen trees and shrubs will soften the visual impact of White Thorn Acacia when it is dormant. They are also used to replant disturbed desert or as a transition tree between landscaped areas and the surrounding desert. Trees planted close together will form a loose, informal hedge that provides screening and security.

Cultural Practices

Foster the development of a more dispersed root system and reduce the risk of wind throw by arranging irrigation emitters at varying distances from the trunk to encourage roots to "seek out" water and nutrients. Irrigation emitter arrangement along with other information on irrigations practices for desert trees can be found at www.aridzonetrees.com and click on the FAQ link.

Prune as needed to reinforce the structure and form of the tree. Periodic thinning is the most desirable method of pruning. Avoid hedging or heading back desert species, as this will only stimulate excessive branching. Do not remove more than 30% of the canopy during the summer as this can lead to sunburn injuries that can later be invaded by wood boring insects. Always use clean, sharp tools that are cleaned regularly in a 10% solution of bleach. For detail pruning guide see www.aridzonetrees.com and click on the FAQ interactive button.

Periodically insect pests can be a problem on some desert trees. On young trees, insect infestation can slow typical seasonal growth. Inspect trees during the growing season for common garden sucking insects such as aphids, thrip, whiteflies or psyllids. During dry months, (May and June) in dusty conditions, spider mites can appear. Monitor for infestation and apply controls as needed. Spray applications of water or water and Safer Soap give short-term control (3 to 7 days) for small insect population. For heavy infestation or longer control use federally registered insecticides. A contact insecticide application will kill existing adults. An application with a systemic soil drench will provide 8 to 12 weeks control for any post application insect hatchings or migration of insects. Before using pesticide for the first time or on new plants or cultivar, treat a few plants and check for phytotoxicity. **Always read label and follow label instruction before using pesticides. For pesticide control recommendations contact a licensed pest control advisor.**

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