

Ebenopsis ebano: Black-bead Ebony¹

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Introduction

This 15- to 30-foot-tall evergreen tree is native to Texas and Mexico and is ideal for use in dry, desert landscapes. The short branches are clothed in very small, dark green leaflets and make up a 15- to 20-foot-wide rounded canopy which casts medium shade below. Short thorns are interspersed among the branches. From June to August, Texas ebony is decorated with dense, plume-like spikes of very fragrant, light yellow to white blossoms. The dark brown to black, woody seed capsules which follow are four to six inches long and persist on the tree. In Mexico, the seeds from these pods are eaten, and the black woody shells have been known to be roasted as a coffee substitute in times past. The attractive, short trunk of Texas ebony is covered with smooth, grey bark. It makes a nice medium-sized shade tree.



Figure 1. Mature *Ebenopsis ebano*: Black-bead ebony.
Credits: Ed Gilman, UF/IFAS

General Information

Scientific name: *Ebenopsis ebano*

Pronunciation: eh-behn-OP-sis eh-BAN-oo

Common name(s): Black-bead ebony, Texas ebony

Family: *Fabaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 9B through 11 (Figure 2)

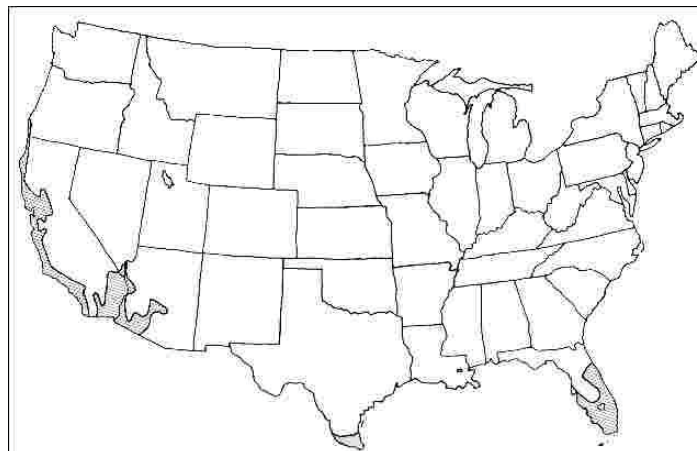


Figure 2. Range.
Credits: UF/IFAS

Origin: native to North America

Invasive potential: not assessed/incomplete assessment

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Uses: parking lot island < 100 sq ft; parking lot island 100–200 sq ft; parking lot island > 200 sq ft; highway median; reclamation; shade; specimen; container or planter

Description

Height: 20 to 30 feet

Spread: 20 to 30 feet

Crown uniformity: irregular

Crown shape: spreading, vase, round

Crown density: moderate

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Figure 3)

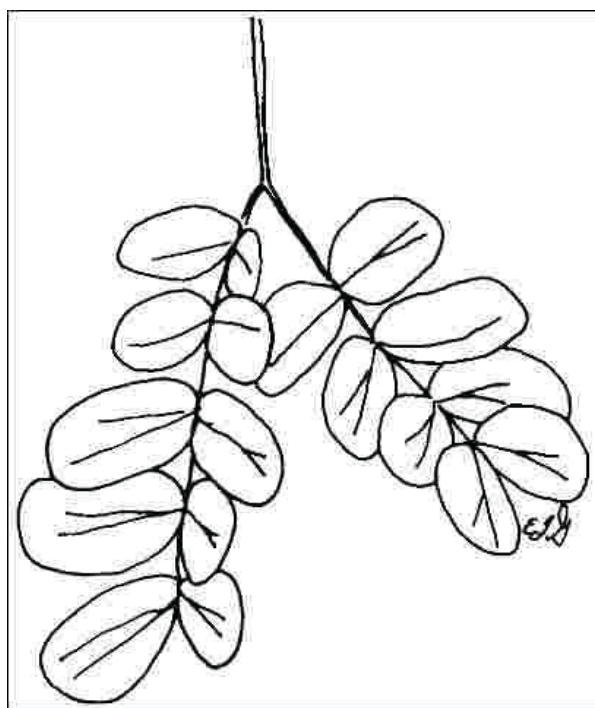


Figure 3. Foliage.
Credits: UF/IFAS

Leaf type: bipinnately compound, even-pinnately compound

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: elliptic (oval), obovate

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Leaf blade length: less than 2 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: yellow, white/cream/gray

Flower characteristics: showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: elongated, pod or pod-like

Fruit length: 3 to 6 inches

Fruit covering: dry or hard

Fruit color: brown, black

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; showy; fruit/leaves not a litter problem

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: branches droop; showy; typically multi-trunked; no thorns

Pruning requirement: needed for strong structure

Breakage: resistant

Current year twig color: green, brown

Current year twig thickness: thick, very thick

Wood specific gravity: unknown

Culture

Light requirement: full sun

Soil tolerances: clay; sand; loam; alkaline; acidic; well-drained

Drought tolerance: high

Aerosol salt tolerance: moderate

Other

Roots: not a problem

Winter interest: no

Outstanding tree: yes

Ozone sensitivity: unknown

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: unknown

Pest resistance: free of serious pests and diseases

Use and Management

Preferring well-drained, alkaline soils, Texas ebony will thrive in full sun with little water once established. Trees are tolerant of wind and compacted soil, helping to make them a popular choice for arid landscapes.

Propagation is by seed.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern. Be careful not to over-irrigate.