

# Twisted Acacia

## *Acacia schaffneri*

**Size:**

Up to 20' tall x 20' wide

**Evergreen/Deciduous:**

Evergreen

**Water Needs:**

Low

**Exposure:**

Full sun

**Hardiness:**

15 degrees F.

**Bloom Period:**

Spring

**General:** This drought tolerant desert tree is native to Mexico and Texas. It has twisted branches and thrives in hot, exposed conditions. The bright yellow, puffball flowers emerge in spring. Leaflets are tiny and visually soft and obscure the pairs of white thorns that adorn younger branches.

**Designer:** The form of this tree is stunning. The name is derived from its incredible mass of wildly intertwining branches, making this among the most architectural of all desert trees. A by-product of the twisted branching form and the spines is the propensity of this tree to attract birds to nest. Even smaller specimens, just 10 to 15 feet tall and wide can have many nests.

**Maintenance:** As with all trees, it should always be pruned thoughtfully. In youth, the form of this tree is rather variable, sometimes dense, sometimes more open. Weak (narrow) crotches should be removed early in the life of the tree. No pest or disease problems have been noted or observed. Some litter is produced from spent leaves and flowers; however leaflets are so small they generally disappear from view and notice.

**Schilling Horticulture Group, Inc.**

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# Silver Torch

## *Cleistocactus strausii*

**Size:**

Up to 8' tall x 6' wide

**Evergreen/Deciduous:**

Evergreen

**Water Needs:**

Low

**Exposure:**

Full sun to light shade

**Hardiness:**

20 degrees F.

**Bloom Period:**

Year-long, but concentrated in the Spring

**General:** This cactus has a vigorous growth rate and will produce offsets to create a patch of columnar cacti. They bloom freely in cultivation, with up to 3" long fuchsia to burgundy flowers that sit perpendicular to the columns. The dense "fur" provides excellent protection against the cold, wind, and harsh sun.

**Designer:** Unique texture and color contrasts well with other cacti and succulents. Silver Torch can be placed near walls and homes as well as in the open. The silver-white color of this plant, combined with its strongly vertical form, make this a stunning addition to any landscape, especially if contrasted against a dark background. The full moon or landscape lighting can also create a very dramatic effect.

**Maintenance:** None. Do not allow soil to remain too moist, especially in clay soils.

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# Texas Olive

## *Cordia boissieri*

**Size:**

10-20' tall x 10-20' wide

**Evergreen/Deciduous:**

Evergreen

**Water Needs:**

Low

**Exposure:**

Full sun

**Hardiness:**

20 degrees F.

**Bloom Period:**

Late Spring – Fall

**General:** Texas Olive is a small tree with large, silver-green leaves that have a soft velvety texture. This tree blooms pure white with yellow throats that turn bronze. Early in life there are two distinct flowering periods in spring and fall, but with age the bloom season extends and eventually it blooms almost continuously from around April through October. Hummingbirds are drawn to the flowers and other birds are attracted to the sweet flesh of the olive-like white fruits. Fruit is not recommended for human consumption.

**Designer:** *Cordia boissieri's* small size and lush foliage makes it an outstanding patio tree. The white flower clusters are particularly attractive in the night landscape.

**Maintenance:** As with all trees, it should always be pruned thoughtfully. With this species good development of structure and form is especially critical in youth. No pest or disease problems have been noted or observed. Quite a bit of litter is produced from spent flowers and leaves. This tree also exhibits a spring deciduous nature, dropping old leaves just before new growth emerges.

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# Little Leaf Cordia

## *Cordia parvifolia*

**Size:**

Up to 6' tall x 8' wide

**Evergreen/Deciduous:**

Evergreen

**Water Needs:**

Low

**Exposure:**

Full sun, reflected heat

**Hardiness:**

15 degrees F.

**Bloom Period:**

Spring – Fall

**General:** *Cordia parvifolia* may be one of the most beautiful desert shrubs in the valley. Charcoal branches grow stiff in an arching pattern to create a distinct structure that is naturally dense. Small, dark, leathery, gray-green leaves line the branches throughout the year. Warm, humid conditions trigger blooming, resulting in a profusion of snowy white blossoms appearing in clusters during the monsoon season.

**Designer:** Little Leaf cordial can be used as a screen, hedge, or border. It also makes a great flowering accent plant, contrasting well with plants with lighter foliage. This tough evergreen shrub is tolerant of full sun, reflected heat, and is native to several regions of Mexico.

**Maintenance:** None required.

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# Toothless Desert Spoon

*Dasyilirion longissimum*

**Size:**  
5-7' tall x 5-7' wide

**Evergreen/Deciduous:**  
Evergreen

**Water Needs:**  
Low to moderate

**Exposure:**  
Full sun, reflected heat, partial shade

**Hardiness:**  
15 degrees F.

**Bloom Period:**  
Summer

**General:** This grass-like mound of smooth, narrow, and angular leaves adds texture and motion to the garden. As plants mature, they slowly form a trunk **to 10'**, **crowned with a 5-7' rosette of leathery** leaves. Older plants will produce a 10-12' tall flower stalk annually.

**Designer:** Good along paths and near pools because although the leaf comes to a point, it flexes easily when touched and is not particularly dangerous. An established plant creates a very strong focal point. Graceful in form, this plant looks great in a container.

**Maintenance:** Low. Do not prune. Remove spent flower stalk.



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# Sky Flower

*Duranta erecta*

**Size:**  
10' – 15' tall x 10' – 15' wide

**Evergreen/Deciduous:**  
Evergreen

**Water Needs:**  
Moderate

**Exposure:**  
Full sun to part shade

**Hardiness:**  
20-25 degrees F.

**Bloom Period:**  
Summer – Fall

**General:** This large tree-like shrub flowers Summer through Fall with hanging clusters of dime-sized bluish-purple blooms delicately laced with white edging. The flower show is often stunning. The growth habit is strongly upright yet weeping on the periphery. The yellow fruit is poisonous to humans.

**Designer:** Best used as screen or background planting. The rich green leaves serve well as a contrast against other foliage colors.

**Maintenance:** May be developed into a single or multi stemmed patio tree. Do not shear. Once the permanent structure has been determined, keep all suckers cleanly removed. Spent flower stalks are persistent and can be pruned off if desired. Sky Flower will appear lusher and flower heavily if watered and fertilized on a regular basis. Slightly cold sensitive, younger plants may be killed by a severe frost; however, established plants will grow back quickly if they freeze to the ground.



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# Texas Ebony

*Ebenopsis ebano*

**Size:**

20-30' tall x 15-30' wide

**Evergreen/Deciduous:**

Evergreen

**Water Needs:**

Low

**Exposure:**

Full sun to partial shade

**Hardiness:**

10 degrees F.

**Bloom Period:**

Spring

**General:** Texas Ebony is a large shrub or small tree that is native to Southern Texas. It blooms with creamy yellow, fragrant flowers in mid-spring. After flowering, large brown seed pods form and persist on the tree. Foliage consists of fern-like leaflets.

**Designer:** The form of this tree is quite unique and very beautiful. Each small branch has an unusual zigzag pattern that is very attractive and interesting. In youth, the **tree's form is rather variable:** sometimes dense, sometimes more open. The foliage comes out very bright green and darkens slightly to a very rich green color. A by-product of the zigzag branches and small thorns is its ability to attract birds. Even smaller specimens, just 10 to 15 feet tall and wide, can harbor quite a few nests.

**Maintenance:** As with all trees, it should always be pruned thoughtfully. No pest or disease problems have been noted or observed. Some litter is produced from spent flowers and occasional seed pods but all in all this is a relatively clean tree.



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