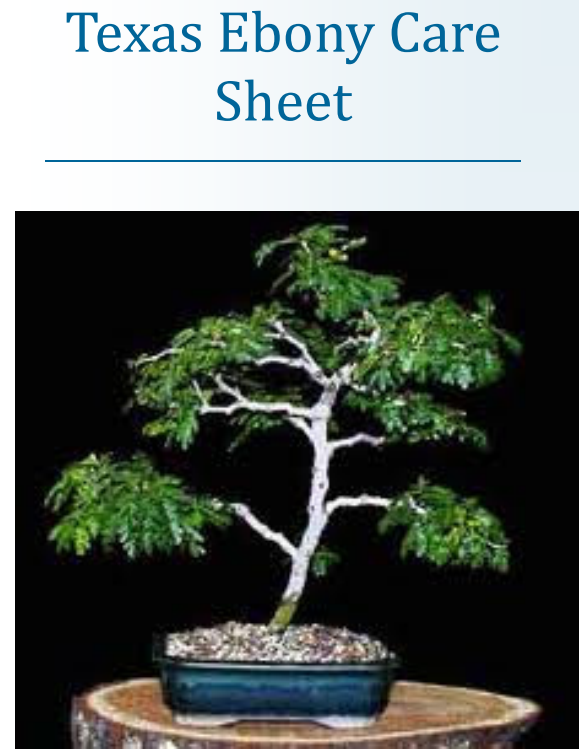


any soil. It likes a very alkaline soil. A mix of screened particles containing 50% inorganic and 50% organics is a good starting mix. If you tend to over-water trees then use a nearly inorganic mix such as red lava, chicken grit, decomposed granite, akadama or Turface, or even properly sized gravel. Make sure to screen out all fine particles that fall through a window screen and only use the material that stays on top of the screen.

Design and Styling: The Texas Ebony can be used for most styles. Group plantings work very well utilizing the graceful and slender trunks.





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(Most of the included information is obtained from several
online sources.)

*"Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if
you were to live forever."
—Mahatma Gandhi—*

The Texas Ebony

(*Ebenopsis ebano*, formerly *Pithecellobium flexicaule*)

General Information: Texas Ebony Or Mexican Ebony or False Acacia, makes an excellent indoor bonsai tree that forms a graceful attractive tree. It is also extremely tolerant of growing conditions in the home.

Even though this tree in nature can grow to 30' tall, it can do so with only a 4" diameter trunk that becomes rough textured and gray or brown in color.

The Texas Ebony is native to Texas and Mexico. It is found in areas that get extremely dry and hot. When it gets too hot its survival strategy is to go dormant and lose all its leaves. It is also able to grow in areas that have significantly more moisture.

Features: Blooms form at the ends of the branches and resemble the caliandra powder puff. Flowers are beige or white and fragrant. They normally bloom in the summer, June-August. 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 or used as a type of coffee. The leaves are fern-like and close up at night or in low light. This tree has sharp thorns, so be careful when pruning.

CARE

Temperature: Zones 9B through 11. In nature, the Texas Ebony will tolerate temperatures in the low teens. But as a bonsai, you should protect it from temperatures below 40°. Even though tropical, a mild frost will not damage the tree but it will lose its leaves and go into a period of dormancy. If the tree is kept at normal room temperatures and watered properly, it will not lose its leaves and will stay evergreen.

Lighting: The Texas Ebony grows best in bright light or full sun. If kept in indirect window light, its growth will be very slow. If using window light add the use of a fluorescent bulb placed at least 4 inches above the leaves of the tree. This will greatly enhance the growth.

As with many legumes the leaves fold up at night, or with transplanting.

Air: Good air flow is always a good idea to help ward off the insects.

Watering: From a dry climate but if it is allowed to completely dry out, it will lose all of its leaves and grow them back once it receives water. Does not tolerate constantly wet feet. As with all bonsai, it is best to allow it to get nearly dry before watering it again.

Fertilizing: Prefers a p.H: 8.0 Use a balanced 20-20-20. Basically, the tree is happy with most any fertilizer. Try to fertilize each week during the growing season with a 1/2 strength fertilizer solution.

Pruning / Training: If you make large reduction cuts on the branches and trunk, new growth will not sprout from the cuts. They will sprout elsewhere. If you make a smaller tree from a larger tree (hacking back) the new growth probably will not come in any where near these cuts. For this reason, leave a length of trunk 50% longer than you think the eventual trunk might need to be. Over time, reduce the extra length

back to the desired lower apex after the tree sprouts back. Leaf size may be significantly reduced with careful attention to watering, light and pinching.

The branches of this tree grow in a zig-zag pattern, for this reason you probably will not need to do any wiring and the tree can be shaped with the clip-and-grow method. If you do use wire, it should be applied while the branches are green, before they turn woody. Older branches are too stiff to bend and therefore difficult to wire. And watch out for those thorns!!

Insects / Pests: There are usually no insects that plague Texas Ebony but occasionally trees can be attacked by scale. Dormant or horticultural oil can be used at 1 tablespoon per gallon of water. Make sure to spray all the leaves and branches on both the upper and lower surfaces each week for four weeks. This should eliminate the scale.

Propagation: Texas Ebony is easy to grow from cuttings. Use cuttings of slightly woody, hardened-off green branches. Large woody pieces are harder to root and may rot before rooting. A rooting hormone may increase the rooting success.

Texas Ebony seed is contained in a pod containing several large brown beans each covered with a waxy, hard coat. This coat must be softened before the seed can sprout. Seed may be planted into bonsai soil, covered and kept moist. The seed will sprout in several weeks to a month. Faster sprouting can be achieved by pouring boiling water over the seed, allowing it to cool overnight and then planting the seed. Alternatively, a pin or file can be used to penetrate the thick covering. Seed treated in this way will sprout in a week or less. Sow on the surface of a rooting medium. Prior to transplanting, remove the tap root. Because of the large tap root they are difficult to collect in the wild.

Repotting: Indoors, the tree grows quite slowly so repotting will only be needed every two to three years. The Texas Ebony may be grown in almost