

## Screwbean Mesquite (*Prosopis pubescens*)

The screwbean mesquite is a small flowering shrub or tree in the pea family. It is native to the southwestern US and northern Mexico. The tree grows many small yellow, spikey flowers, as well as tightly twisted seedpods (up to 5cm long) that resemble little turned screws. It grows well in damp soil near streams and valleys, and sometimes in areas of alkaline substrates. The screwbean mesquite has developed a successful symbiotic relationship with a wide range of desert wildlife, as the tree is able to pollinate when its seeds are scarified in the animals' digestive tracts. The tree also makes a great home to several species of birds and small mammals.

Some fun facts:

- The mesquite's seedpods are very nutritious and can be eaten, as it is high in fiber and protein with a sweet, rich, molasses-like flavor
- The wood and bark of the tree is commonly used in woodworking
- Native Americans used screwbean wood for building, making tools, and as firewood

