



Sophora secundiflora Texas-Mountain-Laurel¹

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INTRODUCTION

Texas-Mountain-Laurel is a small North American native evergreen, growing 15 to 25 feet tall with a 10-foot-spread but is capable of reaching up to 50 feet tall in its native habitat (Fig. 1). It has a narrow upright silhouette and dense foliage which lends itself well to being pruned into a tree form. Texas-Mountain-Laurel can be used as a specimen, patio, or street tree and is ideal for use as a screen, bank cover, or an espalier. The two-inch-long, dark green leaves are glossy, thick, and leathery. In spring, Texas-Mountain-Laurel is a beautiful sight as it displays its dense, two to five-inch-long, pendulous clusters of purple/blue, extremely fragrant flowers. Every so often, a white-flowered form can be found. The hairy seedpods which follow are eight inches long and ripen to reveal the inner, bright red seeds. These seeds are quite decorative and have been used to make necklaces but they are also poisonous. The fissured bark is dark gray to black.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Sophora secundiflora*

Pronunciation: sah-FOR-uh seck-un-dih-FLOR-uh

Common name(s): Texas-Mountain-Laurel, Mescalbean

Family: *Leguminosae*

USDA hardiness zones: 7B through 10A (Fig. 2)

Origin: native to North America

Uses: Bonsai; container or above-ground planter; hedge; large parking lot islands (> 200 square feet in size); wide tree lawns (>6 feet wide); medium-sized parking lot islands (100-200 square feet in size); medium-sized tree lawns (4-6 feet wide);

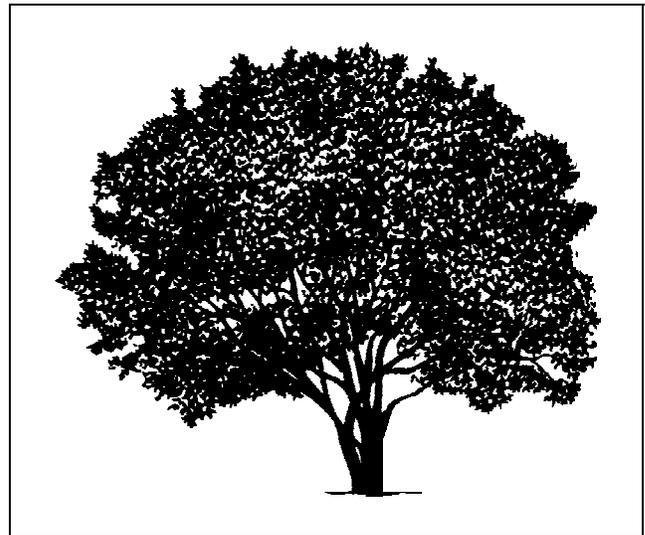


Figure 1. Mature Texas-Mountain-Laurel.

recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; near a deck or patio; reclamation plant; screen; small parking lot islands (< 100 square feet in size); narrow tree lawns (3-4 feet wide); specimen; sidewalk cutout (tree pit); residential street tree; no proven urban tolerance

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree

DESCRIPTION

Height: 15 to 20 feet

Spread: 10 to 12 feet

Crown uniformity: symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Crown shape: round; upright

Crown density: open

Growth rate: slow

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: odd pinnately compound

Leaflet margin: entire

Leaflet shape: elliptic (oval); obovate

Leaflet venation: banchidodrome; pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Leaflet blade length: less than 2 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: purple

Flower characteristics: pleasant fragrance; spring flowering; very showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: elongated; pod

Fruit length: 3 to 6 inches; 1 to 3 inches

Fruit covering: dry or hard

Fruit color: red; white

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; no significant litter problem; persistent on the tree; showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: routinely grown with, or trainable to be grown with, multiple trunks; grow mostly upright and will not droop; showy trunk; no thorns

Pruning requirement: needs little pruning to develop a strong structure

Breakage: resistant

Current year twig color: brown; green

Current year twig thickness: medium

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in full sun

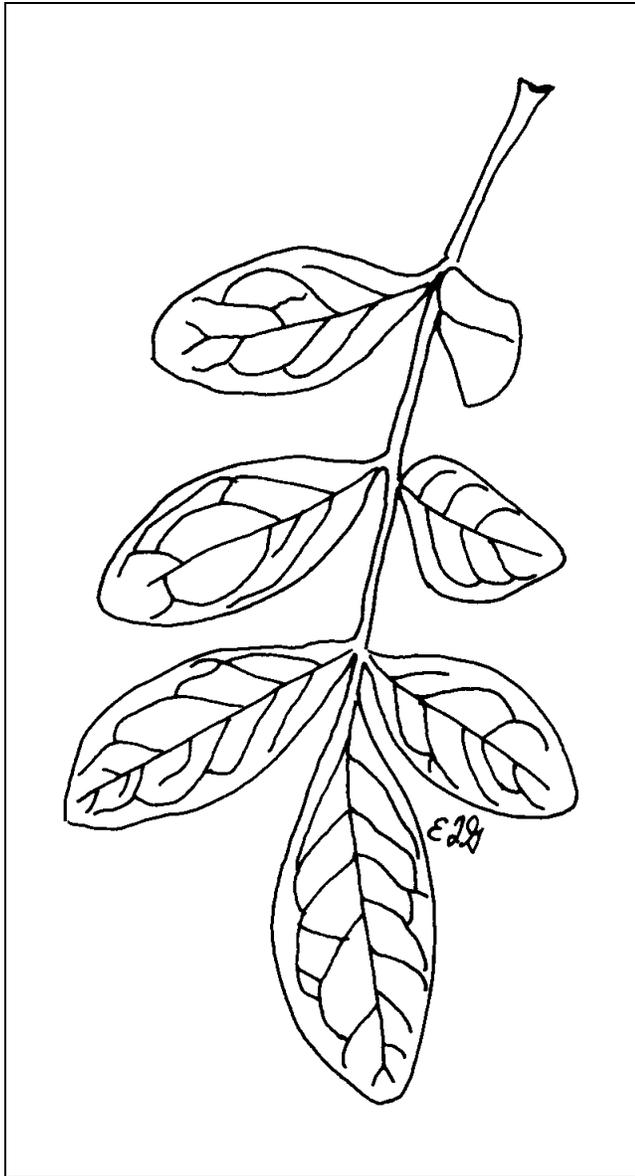


Figure 3. Foliage of Texas-Mountain-Laurel.

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

Drought tolerance: high

Aerosol salt tolerance: moderate

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding tree: tree has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

Invasive potential: little, if any, potential at this time

Pest resistance: no pests are normally seen on the tree

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Usually found as a multi-trunked small tree, Texas-Mountain-Laurel can be trained to a single trunk in the nursery. Single-trunked nursery stock would make nice street trees for planting in small soil spaces, and where overhead space is limited by wires or other structures. Plant a row of Texas-Mountain-Laurel on 15 or 20 foot centers to form a nice canopy over a walk, or locate it close to a patio or deck. The bark on multi-trunked specimens shows off nicely when lit up at night from beneath the canopy.

Texas-Mountain-Laurel should be grown in full sun or partial shade on well-drained soil. This tough plant will tolerate hot, windy conditions and alkaline or wet soils but not compacted soil. Young trees may benefit from afternoon shading from the intense summer sun until they become established.

Propagation is by seed, cuttings, layering, or grafting. Trees on well-drained soils reportedly have a deep root system and will transplant poorly from the wild.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases of major concern. Tender, young foliage is occasionally consumed by *Uresiphita reveralis*.