



# TREES

Trees, the “ceilings for landscape,” provide shady oases in this land of sun. The kinds of trees and their placement determine the character of the garden. Native trees of our area are small to medium sized. Trees should be on a regular watering schedule. As they grow, add drip emitters and move some of the emitters farther from the trunk to accommodate the expanding root zone. Leaving the lower branches on the trunk for several years will protect the tender bark of a newly planted tree from drying wind, hot sun and freezes.



**Bigtooth Maple** Maple family  
*Acer grandidentatum*

**Size:** 25' High x 25' Wide

**Foliage:** Deciduous

**Water:** Medium

**Exposure:** Part shade

**Areas:** East Mountain, Heights, Valley

For an area with moist soil and some shade, nothing is more stunning than the Bigtooth Maple. This is the most colorful of our native trees. In summer, cloaked in large-toothed leaves, it gives solid shade. In fall, the leaves turn brilliant reds and oranges, reminiscent of the fall colors of the eastern forests. Some people are allergic to the pollen produced by the insignificant spring flowers.



**Netleaf Hackberry** Elm family  
*Celtis reticulata*

**Size:** 25' High x 25' Wide

**Foliage:** Deciduous

**Water:** Medium

**Exposure:** Sun

**Areas:** All

As a shade tree, the Netleaf Hackberry develops a spherical canopy of slender, descending branches, but it can also be pruned into a large shrub. The undersides of the oval, serrated leaves have a prominent network of veins. The leaves turn yellow before falling. Like all hackberries, Netleaf Hackberry develops warty bark as it ages. Birds like the small orange berries.



**Desert Willow** Catalpa family

*Chilopsis linearis*

**Size:** 15-25' High x 12-20' Wide

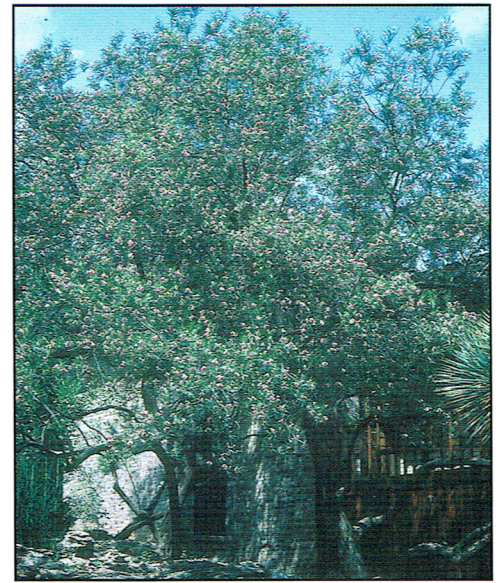
**Foliage:** Deciduous

**Water:** Low

**Exposure:** Sun

**Areas:** Heights, Valley, West Mesa

Desert Willow has winding, gnarled trunks visible through the willow-like leaves. The summer-blooming pale to deep pink and purple flowers attract hummingbirds. In winter, pencil-shaped pods dangle from the branches. Occasionally, nurseries stock varieties with white or burgundy flowers. In the fall, gradually withdraw water to help Desert Willow harden off for winter. Water no more than once a month until it leafs out again.



**New Mexico Olive** Olive family

*Forestiera pubescens*

**Size:** 15' High x 12' Wide

**Foliage:** Deciduous

**Water:** Low

**Exposure:** Sun or part shade

**Areas:** All

New Mexico Olive can be pruned into a tall hedge or trimmed up to form a small multi-trunked specimen tree. Left natural, the branches bend and curve at interesting angles. In early spring, the small greenish-yellow flowers provide nectar for bees. By fall, clusters of oval blue-black fruits (loved by birds) appear on the female trees, and the bright green, deciduous leaves turn yellow. The creamy bark stands out in the winter. New Mexico Olive often develops mildew in a humid area such as a lawn. It is likely to be found in nurseries labeled as *Forestiera neomexicana*.



**One-seed Juniper** Cypress family

*Juniperus monosperma*

**Size:** 15' High x 15' Wide

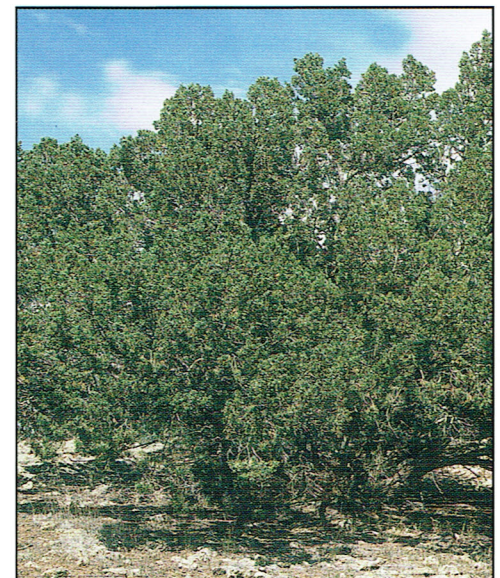
**Foliage:** Evergreen

**Water:** Low

**Exposure:** Sun

**Areas:** All

One-seed Juniper is a shrub-like tree with many stems ascending from the ground. Older trees are picturesque with convoluted trunks and branches. As one of the most common trees in Central New Mexico, One-seed Juniper is exquisitely adapted to our ecosystem. Deer and bear, as well as birds, eat the fleshy fruit. All male junipers release pollen that afflicts allergy sufferers. Therefore, the City of Albuquerque has banned the sale or planting of male junipers within the city limits.







### Rocky Mountain Juniper Cypress family

*Juniperus scopulorum*

**Size:** 20' High x 15' Wide

**Foliage:** Evergreen

**Water:** Low

**Exposure:** Sun or part shade

**Areas:** East Mountain, Heights, Valley

In contrast to the One-seed Juniper, Rocky Mountain Juniper is taller and grows from a single large trunk. The lacy foliage is blue-green, and the weak slender branches tend to droop. On older trees the bark shreds into fibrous strips. Rocky Mountain Juniper is used for a specimen tree or for a windbreak. Birds flock to these trees for the small blue berries. Because male junipers release pollen in the spring, the City of Albuquerque has banned planting male juniper within the city limits.



### Pinyon Pine Pine family

*Pinus edulis*

**Size:** 20' High x 15' Wide

**Foliage:** Evergreen

**Water:** Low

**Exposure:** Sun

**Areas:** East Mountain, Heights

Pinyon Pine is one of the most common trees of our area. When space allows the tree's natural shape to develop, the branching is horizontal, the crown is low and rounded, and the tree is symmetrical. More often the trunk is gnarled and the tree develops interesting shapes. The short stiff needles are aromatic and the bark is dark and rough. Every few years the irregularly shaped cones produce a bumper crop of nutritious pine nuts, enjoyed by squirrels, jays and humans.



### Ponderosa Pine Pine family

*Pinus ponderosa*

**Size:** 60' High x 25' Wide

**Foliage:** Evergreen

**Water:** Medium

**Exposure:** Sun

**Areas:** East Mountain

Ponderosa Pine thrives in the upper parts of the East Mountain area. The young trees have dark, rough bark, but as they develop into stately trees the bark develops orange plates with a fragrance like vanilla. The piney smell and the sigh of the wind in the branches are the essence of the mountain forest. In high desert towns such as Albuquerque, Ponderosa Pine requires much maintenance to counter the effects of alkaline soil, insects, high temperatures and low precipitation.



**Valley Cottonwood** Willow family

*Populus deltoides*

**Size:** 80' High x 60' Wide

**Foliage:** Deciduous

**Water:** Medium

**Exposure:** Sun

**Areas:** East Mountain, Valley

Stately and majestic, the Valley Cottonwood is the largest shade tree used in the Albuquerque area. The shiny green triangular leaves of this fast-growing tree rustle in the breeze and turn yellow in the fall before dropping. Because of its large size and invasive roots, the Valley Cottonwood should be reserved for large lots away from sewer lines. Cavity dwelling birds and squirrels live in hollows that develop in older cottonwoods. Branches on older trees sometimes break in storms and high winds.



**Screwbean Mesquite** Mimosa family

*Prosopis pubescens*

**Size:** 20' High x 25' Wide

**Foliage:** Deciduous

**Water:** Low

**Exposure:** Sun

**Areas:** Heights, Valley, West Mesa

This graceful, open tree was once more common, but its former habitat in the Rio Grande Valley, from Bernalillo to El Paso, is now quite urbanized. It bears pale yellow flowers in summer and later, unique screw-shaped seedpods. This spiny tree, with its gray-green compound leaves, projects light shade and a graceful appearance in scale with smaller spaces. Western Honey Mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*), found on drier more upland sites than screwbean, has bright green foliage and flat seedpods. Both mesquites grow only in the lower elevations where winters are mild.



**Gambel Oak** Beech family

*Quercus gambelii*

**Size:** 20-30' High x 20' Wide

**Foliage:** Deciduous

**Water:** Low

**Exposure:** Sun

**Areas:** All

As an accent tree, or a shrubby thicket, Gambel Oak is a superb addition to a landscape and provides shiny foliage all year. The dark green, deeply lobed leaves turn bronze or copper in the fall and remain on the branches throughout the winter. When deeply watered regularly, this versatile tree will grow fast, but it can tolerate dry periods. Gambel Oak can adapt to a wide range of soils. Ancient Pueblo Indians ate the acorns and used the wood for weaving sticks, digging sticks, clubs and arrows.







**Shrub Live Oak** Beech family

*Quercus turbinella*

**Size:** 18' High x 20' Wide

**Foliage:** Evergreen

**Water:** Low

**Exposure:** Sun

**Areas:** Heights, Valley, West Mesa

Grayish, spiny, holly-like leaves persist on the branches until new leaves appear in the spring. Inconspicuous early spring flowers develop into inch-long acorns that are eaten by wildlife. This species and the Gray Oak (*Quercus grisea*) are native to milder foothills throughout the southwest. In the wild, Shrub Live Oak rarely exceeds six feet, but in the garden it can be coaxed into a small tree. Gray Oak, a true tree, gets about 30 feet tall with oval blue-gray, evergreen leaves.



**New Mexico Locust** Legume family

*Robinia neomexicana*

**Size:** 20' High x 15' Wide

**Foliage:** Deciduous

**Water:** Medium

**Exposure:** Sun to part shade

**Areas:** East Mountain, Heights, Valley

The dazzling pink-purple flower clusters of New Mexico Locust are unique and earn this small spring-blooming tree a prominent site in a native landscape. In summer, the tree produces flat, brown seedpods. The tree has an open crown with long bluish-green leaves and thorns on all stems and branches. New Mexico Locust forms a thicket but limiting its water can control this invasive tendency.



**Western Soapberry** Soapberry family

*Sapindus saponaria*

**Size:** 25' High x 25' Wide

**Foliage:** Deciduous

**Water:** Low

**Exposure:** Sun

**Areas:** Heights, Valley, West Mesa

In spring, large sprays of white flowers appear among the bright green leaves of western soapberry. Then, in fall the leaves turn gold. Translucent amber berries, which contain a soap-making compound, hang from the branches all winter. Western Soapberry tolerates a great deal of heat and wind and also does well in tight planting areas. It does not thrive in colder areas.