

XERISCAPE

NATURE'S CHOICE OF LANDSCAPE



Cercidium (Parkinsonia)

Palo Verde

Palo verdes are native to the arroyos and foothills of the southwestern deserts and Mexico. Their unique green to blue-green bark and branches carry on photosynthesis, even when their small leaves are not present. In the spring these trees are covered with masses of bright yellow flowers, providing some of the most outstanding spring color in our deserts.

Palo verdes thrive in the high summer temperatures, but vary in their cold-hardiness. They prefer full sun, good drainage, and an occasional deep soak during their summer growing season. Cercidium tend to sunburn if pruned during the summer. These are multi-trunked and pruning should be done only to enhance form. Avoid planting palo verde trees in turf areas, where they are easily damaged by power mowers and string trimmers. Once established in a landscape, weaning these trees off regular irrigation helps control tree size, manage growth and limit pruning without compromising tree vigor or flowering. The following palo verdes are some of the most popular, colorful and low maintenance trees available.

Cercidium floridum

Blue Palo Verde

Blue palo verde is the largest of the cercidium, reaching a mature size of up to 30 feet tall and wide. It is the first of the species to bloom in the spring and has the most spectacular show of color. The bark, branches, and leaves are blue-green, but trunks on older trees turn rough and grey with age. Blue palo verdes are the most cold hardy of the palo verdes, and may require more water than other species.

Cercidium microphyllum

Foothill / Littleleaf Palo Verde

Smaller and tougher than the blue palo verde, the foothill palo verde grows 15 to 20 feet tall and wide. It has an irregular, slow and craggy growth habit, and blooms just after the blue palo verde. It also shares with the blue palo verde the distinction of being the state tree of Arizona. The foliage and bark are yellow-green in color, and the leaves are especially small. The foothill palo verde is the most drought resistant and will not tolerate excessive water.

Cercidium praecox

Palo Brea / Sonoran Palo Verde

Palo brea grows to 25 feet tall and wide, and has a unique sculptural form to its branches creating a wonderful symmetrical, umbrella-shaped canopy. Flowers are born close to the bark giving it long wands of flowers in the spring. It's smooth distinctive green bark and bright yellow flowers have made this a popular tree in the Valley. Palo Brea is more cold sensitive than other palo verdes and is susceptible to frost damage on new growth.

Cercidium hybrids

Thornless Palo Verdes

Thornless palo verde hybrids exhibit qualities found in the palo brea, blue, foothills and mexican palo verde. Their canopies are lush, green and provide ample shade. The characteristics that set these cloned varieties apart are distinctive rich green trunks and branches, the absence of thorns, semievergreen growth and brilliant yellow flowers that appear abundantly in spring and intermittently during the summer months. These hybrids are pedestrian friendly desert adapted trees that can be used in a wide array of landscape applications.