



ARIZONA-SONORA DESERT MUSEUM PLANT CARE INFORMATION

Western Soapberry Tree or Mata Muchacho *Sapindus drummondii*

DESCRIPTION: Western soapberry is a fairly slow-growing, deciduous tree with a dense canopy of dark green compound leaves. It somewhat resembles an ash or walnut. Typical Arizona specimens are 15 to 20 feet tall with a smaller spread, though they can grow to 50 feet in deep soil. In nature they often occur in groves because they sucker from the roots. The tiny white flowers are borne in loose clusters in spring, followed by marble-sized, translucent yellow berries in fall. Western soapberry is a semiriparian species of the southern Great Plains, extending into eastern Arizona and the Mogollon Rim. Western Soapberry is the larval food plant for the Soapberry Hairstreak butterfly.

RECOMMENDED USE: Its small size in desert soils makes it a good tree for a patio or small yard.

CULTURE:



Hardiness: Hardy to at least 0°F.



Sun tolerance: Plant in full sun to very light shade.



Watering and feeding: Moderate water use; it does well on weekly irrigations when in leaf. Fertilizing not usually needed.



Soil requirements: Plant in almost any soil, even heavy clay.



Pruning: Pruning seldom is necessary. Suckers can be removed if a grove effect is not wanted.