

Mexican Buckeye

Ungnadia speciosa

Secondary Names:

Mexican-Buckeye

Leaf Type: Deciduous

Texas Native: Yes No

Firewise: Yes No



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Tree Description:

A many-trunked shrub or small tree up to 20 feet tall and trunks up to 10" in diameter, forming an irregular crown.

Range/Site Description:

Limestone soils in Central and West Texas, especially moist canyons, seeps, or rocky bluffs.

Leaf:

Once-compound, alternate, 9" to 12" long, with 5 to 9 leaflets, each 3" to 5" long and 1.5" to 2" wide, ovate or lanceolate, bluntly-toothed along the margin, dark green and glossy on top, paler below, turning yellow in fall.

Flower:

Just before the leaves in spring, a short cluster of pink flowers, each about 1" across.

Fruit:

An odd, woody capsule, about 2" across, shaped like a fig, three-lobed, light brown, enclosing one to three round, smooth seeds.

Bark:

Light brown or gray, smooth at first, but developing thin scales and shallow fissures on larger trunks.

Wood:

The flowers produce an excellent honey; also sold in native plant nurseries for its landscape value.

Similar Species:

Can be mistaken for a pale-flowered redbud (*Cercis* spp.) at a distance; leaves and branches of Hercules'-club (*Zanthoxylum clava-herculis*) have sharp prickles; leaves of common elderberry (*Sambucus nigra* ssp. *canadensis*) are opposite on the twigs.

Interesting Facts:

The hard, round seeds were fashioned by children in rural areas into makeshift marbles.