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Locust, Black 'Purple Robe'

Bloom Color Lavender

Bloom Time Spring

Leaf Color Blue and green

Fall Color Yellow

Leaf Identification

Type: Oddly pinnately compound

Arrangement: Alternate

Venations: Pinnate

Margins: Entire

Shapes: Elliptic, oblong and obovate

Length: Less than 2in./5cm

Fruit Color Black and red

The fruit is dry and of a pod-like shape.

Environment

This plant tolerates drought and salt well.

This plant will grow in very dry soil.

Suitable soil is well-drained/loamy, sandy or clay.

The pH preference is an acidic to alkaline (less than 6.8 to more than 7.7) soil.

Attributes and Features

- Attracts butterflies
- Persistent fruit
- Inconspicuous fruit

***Robinia pseudoacacia* 'Purple Robe'**

Black Locust, Yellow Locust

Fabaceae (Pea)

Type Tree, woody plant

Hardy range 4A to 8A

Height 25' to 50' / 7.60m to 15.20m

Spread 25' to 35' / 7.60m to 10.60m

Growth rate Fast

Form Oval and upright or erect

Exposure Partial shade or partial sun to full sun

Persistence Deciduous

Native Habitat

Species is native to North America

Crown, Branch and Twig

This plant is asymmetrical with a fine texture and has an open crown.

This plant's bark is showy.

Thorns are present on this plant.

Branches or twigs are thin.

This plant is best when trained to a dominant trunk.

This plant typically grows with one trunk.

Little pruning is required.

This plant has low flammability.

Culture Notes

Able to tolerate drought, salt, and poor soil, Black Locust will grow in full sun or partial shade on almost any soil acid or alkaline except that which is permanently wet. A tough tree which should be saved for the toughest sites. Not for general use in urban areas due to borer problems unless located in a moist, well-drained site with plenty of soil space.

Although the wood of Black Locust is reputed to be extremely strong and durable (pioneers used it to fashion nails for building ships and houses), the branches are brittle and subject to damage in high winds. This may be due largely to the tendency for the



branches to form included bark in the branch crotches. The wood is considered ring porous. Foliage from most members of this genus is considered poisonous when ingested. Plants resist browsing by deer. Plants serve as hosts for butterfly larvae.

Tree establishment specifications

Choose good quality trees for planting. The most common cause of young tree failure is planting too deep. In most instances, the point where the top-most root in the root ball originates from the trunk (referred to as the root flare zone or root collar) should be located just above the soil surface. You may have to dig into the root ball to find the root flare. If there is nursery soil over this area, scrape it off. Never place ANY soil over the root ball. The planting hole should be at least twice the width of the root ball, preferably wider because roots grow best in loose soil. In all but exceptional circumstances where the soil is very poor, extensive research clearly shows that there is no need to incorporate any amendments into the backfill soil. Simply use the loosened soil that came out of the planting hole. Simply planting with the topmost portion of the root ball slightly higher than the surrounding soil might still install the tree too deep - be sure to locate the root flare.

Weed suppression during establishment is essential. Apply a 3-inch thick layer of mulch to at least a six-foot diameter circle around the tree. This area should be at least two feet in diameter for each inch of tree trunk diameter and maintained during the establishment period. Apply a thinner layer of mulch directly over the root ball but keep it at least 10 inches from the trunk. This allows rainwater, irrigation and air to easily enter the root ball and keeps the trunk dry. Placing mulch against the trunk and applying too thick a layer above the root ball can kill the plant by oxygen starvation, death of bark, stem and root diseases, prevention of hardening off for winter, vole and other rodent damage to the trunk, keeping soil too wet, or repelling water.

Regular irrigation after planting encourages rapid root growth that is essential for tree establishment. Trees provided with regular irrigation through the first growing season after transplanting require about 3 months (hardiness zones 9-11), 6 months (hardiness zones 7-8), or one year or more (hardiness zones 2-6) per inch of trunk diameter to fully establish roots in the landscape soil. Trees in desert climates may take longer to establish. Trees that are under-irrigated during this establishment period (and most trees are) often require additional time to establish because roots grow more slowly. Be prepared to irrigate through the entire establishment period, especially during periods of drought.

Irrigation also helps maintain and encourage the desirable dominant leader in the tree canopy on large-maturing trees. Instead of a dominant leader, trees that are under-irrigated during the establishment period often develop undesirable, low, co-dominant stems and double leaders that can split from the tree later.

Unlike established plants, which do best with deep, infrequent irrigation, research clearly shows that recently transplanted trees and shrubs establish quickest with light, frequent irrigation. For trees planted in spring or summer, provide one (cooler hardiness zones) to three irrigations (warmer hardiness zones) each week during the first few months after planting. Daily irrigation in the warmest hardiness zones provides the quickest establishment. Following the initial few months of frequent irrigation, provide weekly irrigation until plants are fully established. With every irrigation, apply one (cool climates) to two (warm climates) gallons of water per inch trunk diameter (e.g. 2 to 4 gallons for a 2-inch tree) over the root ball only. In most landscapes that receive more than 30 inches of rain or irrigation annually, if the mulch area is maintained weed-free, irrigation does not need to be applied outside of the root ball. Never add water if the root ball is saturated.

In cooler hardiness zones, in all but the driest years, irrigation of spring- and summer-planted trees usually can be discontinued once fall color has begun. Irrigation of fall planted trees, however, should be continued until foliage has dropped from the deciduous trees in the region. In warmer climates, irrigate fall-and winter-planted trees as described for the spring- and summer-planted trees.

In drier, desert climates there is benefit to be gained from applying additional irrigation outside of the root ball area. This is best done by making a large diameter berm four to six inches high, then filling it with water so it percolates into the soil. For the first two years, irrigate twice each week through the spring, once per week in summer provided monsoons arrive, and twice each week again in fall if it remains warm. Taper off watering to once or twice each month in winter and resume twice weekly next spring. For years three to five, water twice per month in spring, summer, and fall and once or twice per month in winter. During years five through seven, water once every three weeks in warm weather and once every six weeks in winter. After this, the drought-tolerant desert trees should be able to survive on natural rainfall.

Trees with good, strong structure need no pruning at planting, except to remove broken twigs. Do not remove branches to compensate for root loss - research has shown that this can be detrimental to establishment.



Pests, Diseases and Damaging Agents

Pests: Locust borer is a serious pest although borer-resistant clones are now being developed. Also bothered by carpenter worm, locust leaf miner, and scales. Leaf miner is a universal problem, and the trees along the highways in the south can be seen in summer riddled with damage from this pest. Asian longhorn beetle, a new pest in certain sections of the US since 1996, attacks and kills Black Locust. Asian long-horned beetle, a new pest in certain regions of the country since 1996, attacks and kills trees. Tunneling by beetle larvae girdles tree stems and branches. Potentially resistant trees include *Metasequoia* (Dawn Redwood), *Taxodium* (Baldcypress), *Corylus colurna* (Turkish Hazelnut), *Quercus* (Oak), *Gleditsia* (Honeylocust), *Tilia* (Linden), *Ginkgo*, and *Gymnocladus dioica* (Kentucky Coffee Tree).

Diseases: Canker, leaf spot, and powdery mildew.

Special Notes

All or parts of this plant are poisonous.
This plant has aggressive roots.

