

New Mexico Locust



A small tree with colorful clusters of pink-purple pea-like flowers, and compound leaves, which grows on moist sites, canyons, and talus slopes from 5500 to 8700 feet in elevation. It is often found near Pinyon, Juniper, Ponderosa pine, and Gambel oak. It can grow to 25 feet in height and 8 inches in trunk diameter. Deer and bighorn sheep eat the foliage; small animals and birds including quail, chipmunks, and porcupine eat the seeds. New Mexico locust flowers from April in the lower elevations to July at its upper limits. If you are in Georgetown Colorado for the Fourth of July New Mexico locust may be in bloom. The scientific name is *Robinia neomexicana*.

Leaves: compound, 4 to 10 inches long, with 9 to 21 oblong leaflets, each 3/4 inch to 1 1/2 inch long and up to 1 inch wide. Leaf points may be either indented or pointed.

Flowers: Pink, purple or rose-pink (or lavender-fuschia according to one author) in dense 4 inch-long clusters; from April to July depending on location. Locusts with white flowers are black locust, and not native.

Fruit: pods 2 to 4 inches long, about half an inch wide, with 4 to 8 seeds, flat, brown, sticky, with coarse hairs, ripening in September and October.

Stems: Twigs slender, crooked, spiny.

Bark: thin and brown.

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