

A Conservation Plant Released by the Natural Resources Conservation Service
James E. "Bud" Smith Plant Materials Center, Knox City, Texas

Yellow Puff Germplasm Littleleaf Leadtree *Leucaena retusa* Benth.



USDA-NRCS

Yellow Puff Germplasm littleleaf leadtree, *Leucaena retusa*, was released from the James E. "Bud" Smith Plant Materials Center in Knox City, Texas in 1981.

Description

Yellow Puff Germplasm is a native, perennial, warm-season shrub which can grow up to 21 feet tall on undisturbed sites. Its bright green, twice-pinnately compound leaves provide filtered shade, and the bright yellow powder-puff flowers appear from April-October. Its fruit is a thin pod 3-10 inches long and ½ inch in width. Littleleaf leadtree is extremely drought tolerant, but large flower flushes occur after ample rainfall. The cinnamon-colored and flaky wood is brittle and will break in high winds and ice storms. There are approximately 9,769 seeds per pound.

Source

Seed sources for Yellow Puff Germplasm were collected from trees in the Edward's Plateau and Trans-Pecos areas of Texas. Yellow Puff Germplasm is a composite of five collections from Kimble, Sutton, and Real counties.

Conservation Uses

Yellow Puff Germplasm has many conservation benefits. It was released for use in vegetation of critical areas, wildlife habitat enhancement, and aesthetic plantings. It is very palatable and considered a high quality browse plant by many herbivores. White-tailed deer, cattle, sheep and goats will browse the leaves and tender stems whenever the plant is available. Yellow Puff Germplasm provides good cover for game birds, small mammals, and song birds. The seed is high in protein and used as food for wildlife and livestock. Yellow Puff Germplasm is considered an important specie for restoring native habitat in the hill country of central Texas.

Yellow Puff Germplasm is also used for recreation and beautification in Central and West Texas. The yellow flowers and large leaflets provide an attractive ornamental plant for landscapes.

Area of Adaptation and Use

Yellow Puff Germplasm is found on dry rocky slopes and limestone hills in the western portion of the Edwards Plateau and the Trans-Pecos area. It is adapted to different soils, but prefers sites that provide good drainage.

Establishment and Management for Conservation Plantings

Yellow Puff Germplasm is established from seed or by transplanting seedlings. Seed can be planted from late winter to late spring. Plant seed ¼ to ¾ inch deep in areas protected from browsing animals. Scarification is not necessary as untreated seed will germinate and establish easily. Seed should be inoculated with the correct rhizobium bacteria before planting. The recommended inoculum is *Leucaena special1*.

Planting sites should be prepared before seeding or transplanting. Work the site as necessary to reduce weed problems during the first year of establishment. Seedlings should also be protected from rodents and other small mammals feeding on tender foliage. Newly planted areas should be protected from livestock trampling.

Established stands of Yellow Puff Germplasm require little maintenance. It will reseed and re-establish if young seedlings are protected from browsing animals. In areas where prescribed burning is permitted, unwanted top growth can be controlled with burns in established stands.

Seed and Plant Production

Yellow Puff Germplasm is hand harvested when the fruit matures in late summer or early fall. Seed pods should be harvested before splitting open. Harvested seed should be air-dried for one to two days and stored in a cool, dry place. An insecticide can also be added to seed before storage to prevent insect damage.

Availability

For conservation use: Plants may be available at nurseries specializing in native plants.

For seed or plant increase: Generation zero (G0) seed (equivalent to Breeder seed) will be maintained by the USDA-NRCS James E. "Bud" Smith Plant Materials Center, Knox City, Texas and is available by contacting the center.



USDA-NRCS James E. "Bud" Smith PMC

Citation

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For additional information about this and other plants, please contact your local USDA Service Center, NRCS field office, or Conservation District <<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/>>, and visit the PLANTS Web site <<http://plants.usda.gov/>> or the Plant Materials Program Web site <<http://www.plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/>>



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