



HONEY LOCUST

Gleditsia triacanthos

DID YOU KNOW? The substance this tree produces is extracted in order to thicken and give consistency to jam, ice cream, cake, cream, toothpaste, soap, paper, fabrics etc.

It is a deciduous tree that belongs to Fabaceae family. It is native to southeastern United States, in the Mississippi River basin (Virginia) and also to southern Texas and northern Mexico. It is nowadays cosmopolitan.

Common names: “acacia de tres espinas”, “acacia de tres púas”, “gleditsia americana” (Spanish); “gleditsia americana” (Galician); “thorny locust” (English).

Etymology:

- Gleditsia: it is dedicated to 18th century German botanist Johann Gottlieb Gleditsch.
- Triacanthos: it alludes to the thorns that come out three by three, from the Greek word “ácantha”, which means “thorn”.

Description: It is a dioecious, big, and burly tree that can reach 40 meters. Its bark is grey, smooth, and cracked. It has a solid trunk and a big crown. It often shows steely thorns that come out in groups of three (one thick central and two slightly thinner laterals), hence its scientific and common names. Its leaves are deciduous, alternate and composed of 8-20 flakes or leaflets in even number (paripinnate). These flakes are oval, with slightly crenate margins or very thin teeth, so that it may appear to be an entire leaf. Its flowers are green and yellow and are grouped in hanging filaments. Males have no pistil, almost seated; females have a pedicel. Its fruit is very colorful, big, glabra, compressed, somewhat curved, indehiscent, fleshy, pulpy, sugary and edible. It often remains in the tree after leaves fall. It is similar to carob's (*Ceratonia Siliqua* L.) but bigger, narrower and red.

