

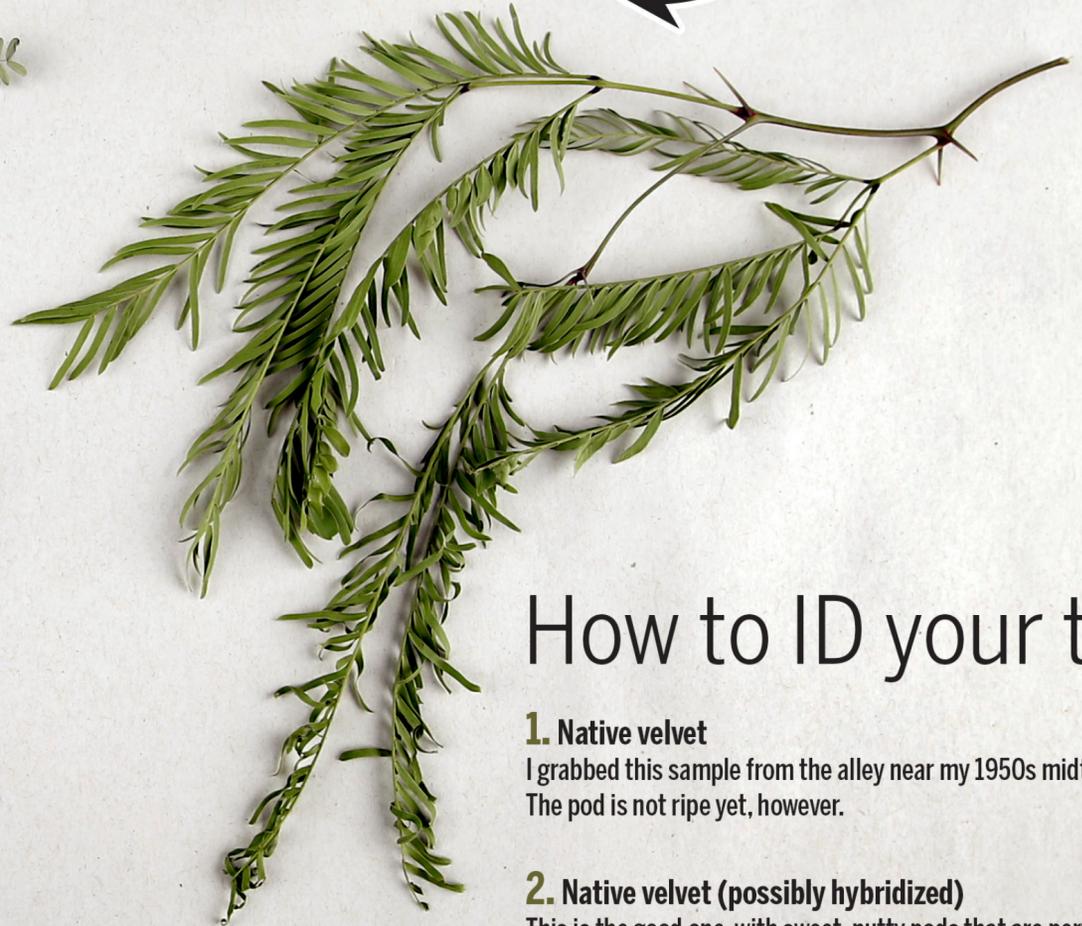
1. Velvet
established tree



2. Velvet
young tree



3. Chilean
with thorns



Chilean pod
chalky, dry



4. Chilean
no thorns



Velvet pods
sweet, nutty



Palo verde
don't eat these



How to ID your tree

1. Native velvet

I grabbed this sample from the alley near my 1950s midtown home. The pod is not ripe yet, however.

2. Native velvet (possibly hybridized)

This is the good one, with sweet, nutty pods that are perfect for milling. Notice the equal pairs of leaves. This young tree was purchased this spring for just \$5 through Tucson Clean & Beautiful's Trees for Tucson program.

3. Chilean/chilensis hybrid, most likely

I planted this one about 10 years ago. It has long, sharp thorns, so watch your arms – and eyeballs – around this variety.

4. Chilean, most likely

Definitely not native to Arizona, says George Ferguson, collections manager at the UA's Herbaria. I inherited this tree when I bought my former home in north central Tucson. The previous owners had left it staked and the poor thing was girdled. It has grown tremendously in the past three years, and I have to trim it at least twice a year. Ferguson says this variety has been around Tucson for just the last 40 years. They can live up to 200 years, so no one knows how big they ultimately will grow.

"This is a problem tree," he says. But at least it doesn't have thorns.