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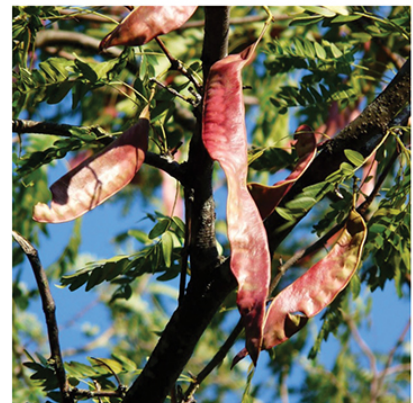
HONEY LOCUST TREE

Gleditsia Triacanthos

 2017

It is difficult to decide whether this honey (or thorny) locust tree is male or female. Let's hope it is the latter because in spring it produces strongly scented clusters of cream coloured flowers that give way to flat seed pods with a sweet, green protein rich pulp that mature in early autumn. Horses and cows love to graze on the pods and so help disperse the seeds. Mice, weasels and stone martens enjoy them too as do coffee lovers, as in hard times you can make an excellent surrogate coffee from the pods. The tree was brought to Europe from America around 1700 and owes its popularity to the fact that it tolerates urban conditions. With the Ginkgo, it is one of the few trees that can survive in the shade of tall buildings and in poor soil. In Africa its impressive thorns make it very useful for building hedges and the fresh pods are used to treat lung conditions. Oh yes, the thorns were once used to anaesthetise rotten teeth but don't try this yourself at home!

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