



BLACK LOCUST (ROBINIA)

Robinia Pseudoacacia



Would you like to know a secret? Acacia honey does not come from the acacia tree but from the fragrant white blossom of the *Robinia* or, as it is more commonly known, the False acacia tree (Britain) or Black locust tree(USA). This beautiful tree owes its name to a case of mistaken identity. In 1606, Jean Robin, a physician at the court of the French king, planted a seed from North America in the garden of the Louvre. He thought it was an acacia seed, but it wasn't. The great botanist, Linneaus knew better but kindly named the tree after the mistaken Robin. It is easy to recognize a *Robinia*. It has a deeply grooved bark, thorny spikes on its bare twigs and very distinctive leaves. The wood is extremely hard and durable. It is resistant to insects, rot and bad weather and is prized for its use as supports in vineyards, garden furniture, fence posts and, in times gone by, it was used as spokes in cart-wheels. It is a good alternative for tropical hardwood. But, be careful, the seeds in the leathery pods are poisonous! Horses, people and chickens can get very ill from eating them. Green ring-necked parakeets, however, love them! You can make delicious fritters with the creamy white flowers.

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