

IMPROVED TECHNIQUES FOR PROCESSING PROSOPIS SEED

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Demand has increased for seeds of the *Prosopis* spp. recently, especially for arid-land reforestation trials in underdeveloped countries. This demand created a need for the Eastern Tree Seed Laboratory to extract and clean seeds of this species. The seed pods of this species, however, are very porous and tend to readily absorb moisture from the air. The pods have been difficult to dry sufficiently at room temperature¹ to easily break them open and remove the seeds. After some evaluation, the problem was overcome by drying the fruit in a forced draft oven for 18 hours at 32° C. Shortly after removal from the oven, the pods were placed in an electric scarifier for 10 to 15 seconds (fig. 1). The light debris was removed by air in a column blower and large material was scalped away with a size 11 or 12 screen. This method produced clean, damage free seed (fig. 2).

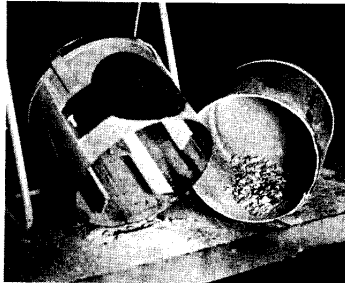


Figure 1.—Scarifier with broken fruit of *Proposi*.

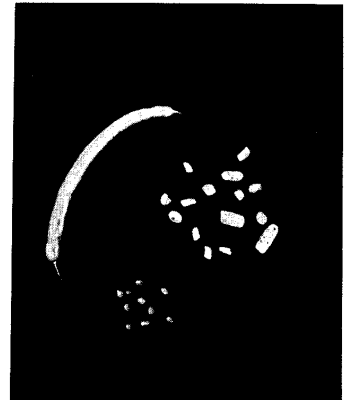


Figure 2.—Right, fruit pod; left, broken fruit after scarification; top, cleaned seed.

¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture. 1974. Seeds of woody plants in the United States. U.S. Dep. Agric., Agric. Handb. 450, 656 p.