Cordia parvifolia  A.P. de Candole  
(Littleleaf Cordia  
(Cordia greggii, Cordia watsonii, Gerascanthus parvifolius))

- Littleleaf Cordia grows from one or a few trunks to form a rounded loose open canopied semi-evergreen to evergreen shrub with an irregular rounded crown 6’ to 8’ (10’) tall with a similar or greater width; the alternate ½” to 1” (1½”) long ovate, elliptic, to obovate leaves are substantially smaller than those on most of the other members of this genus; the pubescent leaves have pinnate main veins with reticulate impressed smaller veins and are greyish green to dark green in color; margins are shallowly denticulate to uniformly serrate, bases rounded to nearly cuneate and tips are acute; twigs are initially green with clear to whitish hairs, later turning a dark grey to dark brown; the dark gray globose buds have only a few scales; older trunks are a patchy mottled gray; plants are cold deciduous where winter temperatures dip and can be drought deciduous in arid climates; the specific epithet means small leaves.

- These shrubs have six pristine white petals fused to form broadly funnel-shaped flowers borne in small clusters on the branch tips; flowers are about 1½” across and present in variable numbers from spring to fall; fruit are very small inconspicuous drupes hidden within the spent calyx; the contrast of bright white flowers and gray-green to dark green foliage is very pleasant, particularly in arid landscapes.

- This native of Northern Mexico is heat, drought, and wind tolerant, suitable for full sun to part shade exposures; plants need well drained soil but adapt to a variety of soil pH and salinity levels; provenance is important in cold tolerance for C. parvifolia, with cold hardiness varying from USDA zones 9 or 8 (7b) to 13 depending upon the genotype; Cordia parvifolia is surprisingly adaptable and can be used in xeric to moderately mesic environments; Littleleaf Cordia makes a great background shrub in xeriscapes and while not overwhelming in bloom, the flowers are present much of the growing season; it makes an outstanding shrub for low input highway plantings; softwood to semi-hardwood tip cuttings root in reasonable numbers and growth in containers is good.

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