

LOCAL NAMES

Arabic (subahi,shubahi,kitr achbash); Tigrigna (kenteb)

BOTANIC DESCRIPTION

Acacia laeta is a shrub or small tree 4-10 m tall with fissured, grey-green bark that seems to be black when seen from a distance and a rounded crown. Young branchlets glabrous, grey-brown or rarely purplish. Stipules not spinescent. Prickles in pairs, claw-shaped, just below each node, purplish-black or black, hooked, 3-5.5 mm long, recurved, sometimes with a third intermediate prickle which is curved towards the top. Where the intermediate prickle is missing, there is often a leaf in its place. Slash pink.

Leaves bipinnate with 3-5 pairs of fairly large pinnate leaflets and 2-5 pairs of pinnae; petiole 0.6-2 cm. The leaflets are 4-15 (20) cm long, 2-7 (10) mm wide, obliquely obovate-elliptic or oblong, glabrous or puberulous, venose, rounded to mucronate or subacute, medium sized and clearly separated from each other and asymmetric. Gland often present near petiole base. Rachis glands present between two pairs of pinnae.

Flowers in racemes, small, very fragrant, yellow, white or cream, in 3-8 cm long spikes, pedunculate, subsessile, bundled in triplets. Stamens are conspicuous and yellow; filaments 5-7 mm long.

Fruit a pale brown leathery pod, 3.5-8 x 1.7-2.8 cm, oblong, rounded to acuminate at apex, with lateral veins, dehiscent, apiculate, very flat, constricted with thickened margin, solitary or borne in tufts. Seeds few, subcircular to lenticular, 8-10 mm in diameter.

The generic name 'acacia' comes from the Greek word 'akis', meaning point or barb.

BIOLOGY

A. laeta is a hermaphrodite that blossoms toward the end of the rainy season. It hybridizes with *A. senegal*; there is evidence that *A. laeta* may be a hybrid of *A. mellifera* x *A. senegal*.

ECOLOGY

A. laeta is resistant to drought and prefers stony or rocky sites.

BIOPHYSICAL LIMITS

Altitude: 1 200-1 650 m., Mean annual temperature: 21-40 deg. C., Mean annual rainfall: 250-750 mm.

Soil type: Trees occur on neutral to slightly alkaline, well-drained, clay or sandy loams.

DOCUMENTED SPECIES DISTRIBUTION

Native: Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Niger, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, Yemen, Republic of

Exotic:



The map above shows countries where the species has been planted. It does neither suggest that the species can be planted in every ecological zone within that country, nor that the species can not be planted in other countries than those depicted. Since some tree species are invasive, you need to follow biosafety procedures that apply to your planting site.

PRODUCTS

Food: The gum produced by *A. laeta* is edible.

Fodder: Leaves and pods of the tree are browsed by livestock.

Fuel: *A. laeta* is a suitable source of firewood and charcoal.

Fibre: Bark is used for making ropes.

Timber: Wood is used for local construction.

Tannin or dyestuff: Animal skins are tanned using a watery solution derived from the bark of trees.

SERVICES

Boundary or barrier or support: Wood of *A. laeta* is used to make fence posts. The tree can tolerate repeated browsing giving it a good potential as a hedging tree.

TREE MANAGEMENT

During the first two years weeds must be efficiently controlled, and the plantation must be protected from fire and livestock. The practice of stripping the bark should be discouraged as it frequently kills the tree.

GERMPLASM MANAGEMENT

Seeds storage behaviour is orthodox; long-term storage. On average, there are 8 500-10 000 seeds/kg.

FURTHER READNG

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Vogt K. 1995. A field guide to the identification, propagation and uses of common trees and shrubs of dryland Sudan. SOS Sahel International (UK).

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SUGGESTED CITATION

Orwa C, Mutua A , Kindt R , Jamnadass R, Simons A. 2009. Agroforestry Database:a tree reference and selection guide version 4.0 (<http://www.worldagroforestry.org/af/treedb/>)