

Acacia Senegal

Mimosoideae

Indigenous

Common names: **Bara:** yudek; **Eng:** three-thorned acacia, Sudan gum arabic; **Gogo:** mzasa; **Iraqw:** yudek; **Nyam:** mgwata, mgwatu, katatula, katita; **Nyat:** mukhubo; **Rangi:** muhunga; **Suku:** igwata, mkwata; **Zinza:** bwara, mkoto.

Ecology: An African Acacia common in arid and semi-arid zones, 0-1,700 m, very drought resistant but prefers moist, well-drained soils and tolerates high daily temperatures and long dry seasons. The extensive lateral root system helps to bind soil together. In Tanzania it is widespread in dry scrub and wooded grassland.

Uses: Firewood, charcoal, poles, tool handles, medicine (roots), fodder (pods, shoots, leaves), nitrogen fixation, soil conservation, soil improvement, rope (root bark fibres), gum, dye (seeds).

Description: A shrub or tree to 12 m, rounded, many low branches **BARK:** waxy, smooth, then **peeling yellow and papery from red-brown base.** **THORNS:** prickles in threes, the central one hooked downwards, the two laterals curved up, brown to black. **LEAVES:** compound, usually hairy, only 3-6 pairs of pinnae, on a stalk to 7 cm, leaflets grey-green, small and narrow. **FLOWERS:** **creamy spikes**, one or more, 2-8 cm long, fragrant, usually develop before the rainy season, buds are red. **FRUIT:** pods, variable, thin and flat, oblong 10 cm, soft **grey-yellow becoming paper brown, veins clear**, few seeds.

Propagation: Seedlings, direct sowing.

Seed info.: No. of seeds per kg: 8,000-11,200. Susceptible to beetle attack, germination is uniform and good, up to 70 % at 15 days.

treatment: not necessary for fresh seed; for stored seed nick or soak in cold water for 24 hours.

storage: will store well in a cool, dry and insect-free place.

Management: Slow growing, needs protection from animals during early stages; lopping, coppicing.

Remarks: Can be intercropped (sorghum, millet). Gum production is excellent when grown on poor soils.

