

Acacia albida (Faidherbia albida)

Mimosoideae

Indigenous

- Common names:** Eng: apple-ring acacia, winter thorn. **Fipa:** mchese; **Gogo:** mdoladole, mgonandele, mluma, mujehe; **Haya:** murunda; **Hehe:** mpogolo; **Lugu:** mkongolo; **Nguu:** mkilolo; **Pare:** 3mkambabu; **Rangi:** ikundabe, igudabe, isaimo, saimo; **Suku:** nanda; **Swah:** mkababu, mgunga; Zinza: mranda.
- Ecology:** Native to the Middle East and Africa. Within Africa, widespread in semi-arid areas. Prefers semi-arid and riverine zones in Tanzania, 0-1,800 m. It grows well in areas with a high watertable and alluvial, loamy or sandy soils which drain well.
- Uses:** Firewood, charcoal, timber (construction), posts, utensils, flavouring (pod), medicine (bark), fodder (pods and leaves), shade, nitrogen fixation, soil conservation, soil improvement.
- Description:** One of the tallest of the Acacias, deciduous, sometimes to 30 m with high rounded spreading crown. Branchlets **zigzag, shiny grey**. **BARK:** dull grey, fissured and scaling; thorns in pairs, **straight to 2 cm, often pointing downwards**. **LEAVES:** compound, 3-8 pairs of pinnae each with 6-23 (usually 9-16) pairs of **grey-green** leaflets, up to 1 cm, **rounded and overlapping**. **FLOWERS:** In **slender spikes to 14 cm, cream-white**, attracting bees, fragrant, on the bare tree. **FRUIT:** distinctive **twisted pods**, smooth, **bright orange**, to 25 cm long and quite thick, edge thickened, containing 10-20 seeds which ripen at the end of the dry season. Seed are set free when the pods rot on the ground.
- Propagation:** Seedlings, direct sowing.
- Seed info.:** No. of seeds per kg: about 9,000; germination 45-96%.
- treatment:** nick the seed or immerse in hot water, allow to cool and soak for 24 hours.
- storage:** seed can be stored for many years if dried properly and kept in a dry cool place free from insects.
- Management:** Slow initial growth, later fairly fast growing on good site; and even in poor sites provided the watertable is high.
- Remarks:** The tree is widely used in dryland agroforestry. It is deep rooted and does not compete with food crops.

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