

Indigenous

Ar: *Sunt*Eng: *Egyptian thorn*Hd: *Eghered*Km: *Kuka*Nr: *Takendeb*Sh: *Aflo*Tg: *Ghered***Tr** *Ghered*

**Ecology:** Common in arid and semi-arid areas in Africa. A very variable plant with several subspecies. It grows on a wide variety of soils. In Eritrea, it occurs in woodlands and scrub in the lower Gash river plains, e.g. at Alighder (Numero-ashera), 700-1,400 m.

**Uses:** **Firewood, charcoal**, poles, tool handles, carving, **medicine** (fruit, bark, roots), **fodder** (leaves, pods), bee forage, nitrogen fixation, soil conservation (river banks), windbreak, live fence, gum, tannin, dye (seeds), toothbrushes.

**Description:** A large shrub or small tree, usually 2-6 m but can reach 14 m, **branching from the base** to make a **rounded crown**. **BARK:** On trunk rough **brown-black**, fissured. Young shoots often red-brown, hairy. **THORNS:** **Thin, grey-white to 10 cm**, often shorter and straight, may point backwards. **LEAVES:** Compound, 2-11 pairs pinnae on leaf stalk 3-6 cm; new growth in the dry season. **FLOWERS:** Fragrant, **bright yellow round heads**. **FRUIT:** Pods, vary in different subspecies, straight or curved to 17 cm, fleshy and thick, hairy or not, narrowed between seeds or not. Seeds seen as distinct raised bumps in the pod, set free when pods rot on the ground.

**Propagation:** Seedlings, direct sowing.

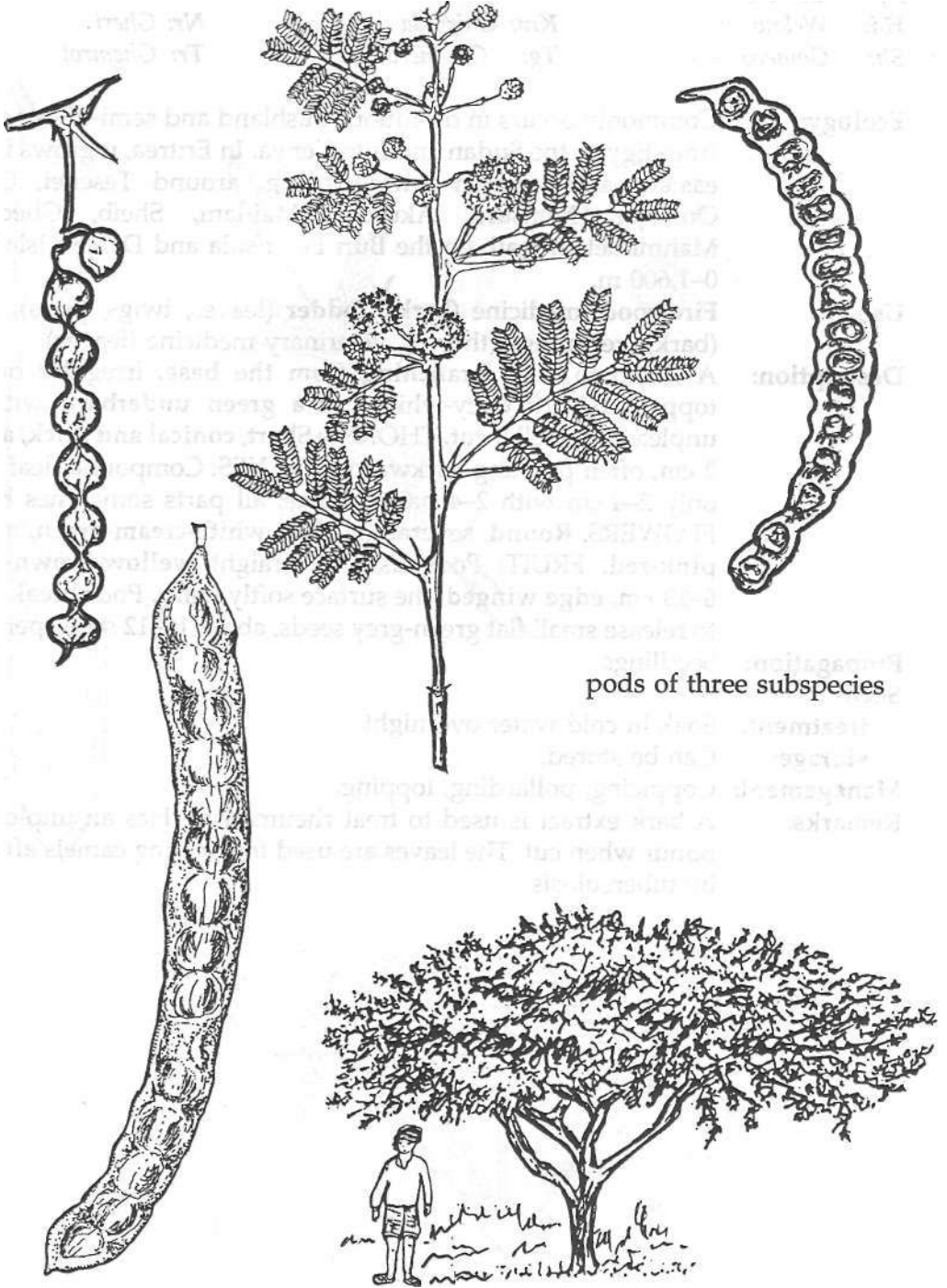
**Seed:** Beetles attack the seed when still in the pod. Separate by immersion in water; bad seeds float. Germination rate 60-90%; no. of seeds per kg: 7,000-11,000.

**treatment:** Not necessary for fresh seed. Nick stored seed or soak in cold water for 24 hours.

**storage:** Seed stores well.

**Management:** Medium to fast-growing on good sites; lopping, pollarding.

**Remarks:** Two subspecies, *nilotica* and *indica*, are recognized in Eritrea: subspecies *nilotica* is introduced. The pods of subspecies *nilotica* are hairy, grey-white, "necklace like", the seeds separated along the pod. Young plants do not compete well so weeding is necessary. Wood is tough and termite resistant. The shrub can form thickets. This is not a preferred forage or bee tree if other browse or acacia blossom is available. Medicine from the roots is said to be a cure for flu.



Pods of three subspecies