

Indigenous

Common names: **Ateso K:** Ekapelimen **English:** Egyptian thorn, scented-pod acacia.

Ecology: Common in arid and semi-arid areas in Africa. A very variable species that can grow on a wide variety of soils, from coastal sandy soils to black-cotton soils. In Uganda, it occurs in the dry savannah of Gulu, Kitgum, Moroto, Kotido and Mbale Districts, usually on gravel soils, 600-1,800 m. Very common in Moroto District.

Uses: Poles, tools, carvings, food (pulp in pod), medicine (roots), stimulant (bark), fodder (leaves, pods), bee forage, nitrogen fixation, soil conservation, windbreaks, gum, tannin, dye, live fence, toothbrushes.

Description: Usually a small tree to no more than 6 m. Often branched from the base, crown usually rounded. **BARK:** brown-black, rough, fissured, young shoots red-brown, hairy. **THORNS:** **greyish, to 10 cm long, straight, usually shorter**, often pointing away from shoot tip (deflexed). **LEAVES:** bipinnate grey-green, new growth in dry season, 2-11 pinnae with few to many leaflets, small glands visible along leafstalks. **FLOWERS:** fragrant, **round heads, bright yellow**. **FRUIT:** straight or curved pods, **17 cm long to 2 cm wide**, very variable; **green and fleshy when young, softly hairy, with fruity smell**, rounded both ends, purple-brown when mature, exuding gum if squeezed, 8-15 seeds, flat, about 1 cm across, smooth brown-black. Pods rot and do not break open.

Propagation: Seedlings, direct sowing at site.

Seed: No. of seeds per kg: 6,000-11,000. Seed attacked by beetles in pods; separate through immersion in water—bad seeds float. Germination rate 60-90%.

treatment: not necessary for fresh seeds. For stored seeds only, nick or soak in hot water, allow to cool, and soak for 24 hours.

storage: seed stores well if kept cool, dry and insect free. Add ash to reduce insect damage.

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

Remarks: The bark and pods have a high tannin content and are used for tanning. The poles are durable and valued for building as the wood is tough and termite resistant. Subspecies *subalata* is the common one in Uganda (there are nine subspecies in Africa).

