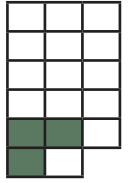


Acacia senegal

Fabaceae



Indigenous

Am: *Kontir, Sbansa-girar*

Eng: *Sudan Gum Arabic, Three-thorned acacia*

Ga: *Akersa*

Or: *Idado, Sabansa dima, Sapessa*

Sm: *Adad, Adad-meru, Agabo, Galol, Marah*

Tg: *Qentib, Qentiba*

Wt: *Tundukiyac*

Ecology

A common acacia in dry parts of Africa and Asia. Found from West Africa and North Africa, south to South Africa. In Ethiopia, common in Dry Bereha and Dry and Moist Kolla agroclimatic zones of the Afar plain, western Welo, Shoa, Bale, Arsi, Sidamo, Gamo Gofa, and Harerge; tolerates high daily temperatures and a long dry season. Prefers moist and well-drained soils. Widespread in dry scrub, wooded grassland, 300–1,700 m.

Uses

Firewood, charcoal, posts, poles, tools, handles, food (seed), medicine (decoctions from bark and roots), fodder (pods, leaves), soil conservation, soil improvement, high quality gum, dye (seeds), fish net (root fibers).

Description

A shrub or tree to 15 m, rounded, many low branches, or tall and thin. **BARK:** Variable, smooth or peeling yellow and papery from red-brown base. **THORNS:** Prickles in threes, the central one hooked downwards, the other two curved up, below each node, brown to black. **LEAVES:** Compound, usually hairy, only 3–6 pairs

of pinnae on a stalk to 7 cm, leaflets 8 – 18 pairs, narrow (7 x 2 mm), very small, grey-green. **FLOWERS:** Creamy spikes, one or more, 2–10 cm, fragrant, usually develop before the rainy season. **FRUIT:** Pods, variable, thin and flat, oblong to 14 cm, narrowing at both ends, grey-yellow becoming papery brown, veins clear, splitting to release seed.

Propagation

Seedlings, direct sowing at site.

Seed

Not a prolific seeder. Seed susceptible to beetle attack.. Germination rate is low. 8,000–11,000 seed per kg.

Treatment: Nick seed or soak them in cold water for 24 hours.

Storage: Seed stores well in a cool, dry and insect-free place.

Management

Slow growing; needs weeding and protection from animals during early stages, lopping, coppicing.

Remarks

Three subspecies are recognized in Ethiopia. Can be intercropped (e.g. with sorghum and millet). Gum arabic is traded commercially for use in dyeing, ink making and medicine. Production is best when the tree grows in poor soils.

