

Acacia tortilis (A. spirocarpa)

Mimosoideae

Indigenous

Common names: **Arusha:** oldepesi, olerai, sanzavi; **Bara:** harbanghedj honywam; **Chag:** mrimba, msawero; Eng: umbrella thorn; Gogo: mkungugu, mwaligunza; **Goro:** tsantsafi; **Hehe:** mhango, muhangu; **Iraqw:** harbagheid, fistoo, santsafi; **Jita:** muhare; **Maasai:** ol asili, ol gorete; **Mbug:** moonga, movunga; Nyam: mgunga; **Nyat:** mgunga; **Pare:** mgunga; Rangi: muhunga; **Sand:** afa; **Swah:** mgunga, mugumba; **Suku:** mgunga; Zigua: mkongoe.

Ecology: A common Acacia all over Africa and also found in the Middle East, Israel, Saudi Arabia and Yemen. In Tanzania, it grows in most parts of the country, especially the north. It prefers deep well-drained loamy soil but can also **grow** in shallow soil. Its deep roots penetrate a wide area to collect water. Grows up to 1,500 m in Tanzania.

Uses: Firewood, charcoal, timber, poles, posts, fodder (shoots,] leaves, pods), bee forage, soil conservation, nitrogen fixation, shade (livestock), fences (cut branches), fibre (bark).

Description: A medium-sized thorny tree 4-20 m, the **crown layered, flat and spreading**, or rounded. **BARK: grey-black, cracked and fissured** when mature. **THORNS: two kinds: pairs of small hooked thorns, also pairs of straight white thorns to 8 cm**, sometimes mixed pairs. **LEAVES:** compound, 2-10 pairs of pinnae on a **short stalk** 2-4 cm. **FLOWERS:** round, fragrant, **cream**. **FRUIT: yellow-brown pods**, each containing up to 10 brown seeds, hang in **dense bunches spirally twisted**, sometimes **in rings**.

Propagation: Seedlings, direct sowing.

Seed info.: No. of seeds per kg: 12,000-31,000. Slow germination; 72% after 30 days, can be quicker under ideal conditions.

treatment: immerse in hot water, allow to cool and soak for 24 hours or nick seed coat.

storage: seed can be stored for a very long period without losing viability if kept dry and insect free.

Management: A slow-growing species but will grow relatively fast on dry sandy soils. Young trees should be protected from goats. Lopping.

Remarks: *Acacia tortilis* is recommended for fuelwood production in semi-arid areas with low rainfall and sandy soils. It can be left in pasture or crop land. Protect an area from goats to encourage natural regeneration.

