

Indigenous

Af: *Numhele*

Ar: *Surrih*

Bl: *Hastena*

Sh: *Debina*

Tg: *Bersenai*

Tr: *Asten*

Ecology: A shrub of arid and semi-arid areas in much of West Africa and India; also Zaire and Angola. It prefers heavy soil but can grow in sand and has been used to hold sandy river banks. Often found on termite mounds with other shrubs or at the foot of other trees such as *Balanites*. In Eritrea, it grows in the lowlands and midlands and on the Dahlak Islands, 0-1,900 m.

Uses: **Firewood**, food (young shoots), flavouring (dried leaves), **medicine** (leaves, roots, ash), fodder (leaves, flowers, fruit), toothbrushes, river-bank stabilization.

Description: An evergreen twiggy shrub or, rarely, a small tree to 5 m, sometimes climbing. **BARK:** Pale or dark, strongly grooved, branches often stiff and sharp, young twigs "floury" with little white scales or hairs. **LEAVES:** Simple, small, **2-5 cm, oblong, grey-green** along hairy twigs. **FLOWERS:** **Green-yellow**, few in a cluster, **ovary stalked**, 4-5 stamens each 2 cm long. **FRUIT:** On a stalk to 6 cm, noticeable when ripe as the cylindrical pod up to 4 cm long breaks to show **orange-red pulp around black seeds**.

Propagation: Seedlings.

Seed info.: No. of seeds per kg: about 8,000.

treatment: No treatment required.

storage: Seeds are perishable and therefore should not be stored for long.

Management: Coppicing.

Remarks: Good fodder in the dry season. Very common in dry areas. Many medicinal uses for internal disorders. Roots and leaves are used to treat anthrax in cattle.

