

Caesalpinia decapetala

Caesalpinioideae

Tropical and subtropical Asia

Eng: *Mauritius thorn*, *Mysore thorn*

- Ecology:** Widely grown as a live fence, often becoming naturalized in wooded grasslands and upland evergreen bushlands, 1,600-2,100 m. In Eritrea, it was introduced in the 1930s for live fencing in Segenaiti, Elabered and Asmara.
- Uses:** Medicine, fodder (leaves, pods), **bee forage**, mulch, **ornamental, live fence**, necklaces (seeds).
- Description:** A shrub or **climber** occasionally reaching 10 m. **LEAVES:** Feathery compound with 6-10 pairs of pinnae and **oblong leaflets. Hooked prickles** scattered along branches and even on the leaf stalk. **FLOWERS:** Showy **pale yellow, in spikes** to 30 cm, 2 cm across with orange stamens hanging down. **FRUIT:** Clusters of **brown pointed pods, held erect on woody stalks**, scattering many seeds as they open.
- Propagation:** Seedlings, direct sowing.
- Seed:** Germination rate $\pm 60\%$.
- treatment:** Soak in cold water for 24 hours.
- storage:** Seed can be stored for a long period if it is kept dry and free from insects.
- Management:** Trim as a live fence.
- Remarks:** Fairly fast growing. May develop into a serious weed in good soil if not checked, especially in pasture land. Burning in the dry season is an effective control measure. The thorns are so effective that a *C. decapetala* hedge has been compared to barbed wire.

