

Caesalpinia decapetala

Fabaceae



Tropical and subtropical Asia,

Mauritius

Am: *Yeferenji kiikita*

Eng: *Mauritius thorn, Mysore thorn*

Ecology

Widely naturalized in Africa in high- and medium-rainfall areas. In Ethiopia, commonly grown as a live fence and often becoming naturalized in wooded grasslands, disturbed grounds, and upland evergreen bushlands of western Welo, Shoa, Arsi, Harerge, and Kefa. It prefers hillsides and valley slopes in Dry, Moist and Wet Weyna Dega agroclimatic zones, 1,200–2,100 m.

Uses

Bee forage, ornamental, mulch, nitrogen fixation, live fence, necklaces (seeds).

Description

A shrub or climber occasionally reaching 10 m. LEAVES: Feathery compound with 4–10 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 green (if fresh), brown (if dry) pointed pods, held erect on woody stalks, scattering many seeds as they open.

Propagation

Direct sowing at site.

Seed

Germination rate ± 60 %.

Treatment: Soak in cold water for 24–48 hours.

Storage: Seed can be stored for a long period if it is kept 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 a control measure. The thorns are so effective that a live fence of *C. decapetala* has been compared to a fence with barbed wire.

