

**Caesalpinia decapetala**

Fabaceae (Caesalpinaceae)

**Tropical Asia**

**COMMON NAMES:** **English:** Mysore thorn, Mauritius thorn; **Kamba:** Kitandambo; **Kikuyu:** Mubage; **Kipsigis:** Chepkomon; **Kisii:** Ekenagwa; **Luhya:** Luavari, Olunani; **Luhya (Bukusu):** Lunani; **Luo:** Matata, Okwato; **Maasai:** Oiti orok.

**DESCRIPTION:** A prickly shrub or climber, occasionally reaching 10 m. **LEAVES:** Feathery, compound, to 50 cm long with **hooked prickles below the leaf stalk**. **FLOWERS:** Showy **pale yellow**, in **spikes** to 30 cm long, 2 cm across with orange stamens hanging down. **FRUIT:** Clusters of brown, pointed **pods**, held **erect** on woody stalks, scattering seeds as they open.

**ECOLOGY:** Widely naturalized in Africa in high- and medium-rainfall areas, 650–2,100 m. In Kenya, widespread but more common in highland parts of Rift Valley, Central, Western and Nyanza Provinces. Common in red and sandy soils. Agroclimatic Zones I–III.

**USES:** Bee forage, ornamental, mulch, nitrogen-fixing, live fence.

**PROPAGATION:** Direct sowing at site.

**SEED:** Germination rate 60%.

**treatment:** Soak seed in cold water for 24–48 hours.

**storage:** Seed can be stored for long periods. Add ash to reduce insect damage.

**MANAGEMENT:** Fairly fast growing. Trim as a live fence.

**REMARKS:** Widely used for live fencing but may develop into a serious weed if not checked, especially in pastureland. It is already a very troublesome weed in parts of Kenya and north of the Vaal River in South Africa. Burning in the dry season is an effective control measure. Roots said to be poisonous.

**FURTHER READING:** Blundell, 1987; Bein et al., 1996; Bekele-Tesemma et al., 1993; Dharani, 2002; Fichtl and Adi, 1994; Katende et al., 1995; Mbuya et al., 1994; Noad and Birnie, 1989; Palgrave and Palgrave, 2002.

