

Central America

**Common names:** **English:** Calliandra.

**Ecology:** Calliandra species have long been popular in the tropics as ornamentals due to their red flower heads. This species has been planted for forestry purposes, especially as quick-growing fuelwood. Brought very recently to Uganda; does well in a variety of soils, including acidic ones, 1,500-2,000 m. Performs better at higher altitudes than *Leucaena* and tolerates several months of drought but does best with high rainfall. It does not tolerate waterlogging.

**Uses:** Firewood, poles, fodder (leaves, twigs), bee forage, shade, ornamental, mulch, nitrogen fixation, soil conservation, windbreak.

**Description:** A large multi-stemmed shrub, 4-6 m, branches spreading, maximum stem diameter in good conditions 20 cm. The canopy can be quite dense. **BARK:** grey-brown, smooth. **LEAVES:** compound, dark green, folding at night, shed in a long dry season. **FLOWERS:** showy **red "brushes" of many long shiny stamens**, very many on the stalk. **FRUIT:** a pod about 10 cm long which breaks open, each half curling back to set free up to 15 seeds.

**Propagation:** Seedlings. Direct sowing could work well if sufficient quantities of seed were available, but seed is normally in short supply.

**Seed:** No. of seeds per kg: about 19,000.

**treatment:** immerse in hot water, allow to cool and soak for 12-24 hours, or soak in cold water for 24 hours,

**storage:** seed stores well for 1-2 years at room temperature.

**Management:** Very fast growing on good sites: lopping, coppicing.

**Remarks:** Although the tree coppices well, the vigour of a stand declines with age and it only lasts for 7-12 years. Beetles sometimes attack flowers and hence reduce seed production. A high tannin content reduces its palatability as fodder but the foliage contains about 22% protein. The wood is dense and burns well but is often attacked by ants. It can be used as a pioneer on poor soils. Still on trial in Uganda, and so far common only near Kabale.

