

Calotropis procera

Asclepiadaceae

Indigenous

Af: *Ghulaento* Ar: *Kisher* Bl: *Tenfia*
Eng: *Apple of Sodom. Dead Sea fruit* Hd: *Emberese*
Km: *Tanfa, Buka* Nr: *Boo* Sh: *Ghelaeto*
Tg: *Ghindae* Tr: *Ghindae*

Ecology: A common African plant from the Sahel to East Africa, the Sudan and the Arabian peninsular to India. It also grows around the Dead Sea and in the oasis of Jordan. In Eritrea, it is common throughout the country below 1,700 m, including the Dahlak Islands. It prefers bare road-side cuttings, banks along permanent or seasonal water courses and will grow where there is enough water underground.

Uses: Firewood (old stalks), **medicine** (bark, latex), fibre (bark), seed fluff (stuffing), medicine for camels, saddles (stem), **hut making** (*shurub*), river-bank stablization.

Description: A branched shrub, usually 2-3 m but up to 5 m. BARK: Corky and peeling, the **round stems full of white latex**. LEAVES: **Large and oval**, pale grey-green and fleshy, about 20 cm long, **in pairs around the stems**. FLOWERS: In stalked clusters of 3-10 between the leaves, each 2 cm across, with 5 **white-pale mauve lobes tipped with dark purple**. FRUIT: Develop in twin-lobed round bodies **over 10 cm long. Green and spongy**, then dry out to release numerous flat brown seeds **with long silky hairs**.

Propagation: Seedlings, wildings.

Seed:

treatment: No treatment required.

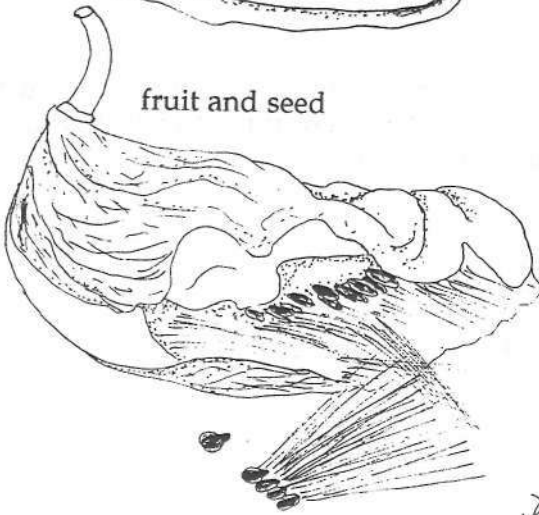
storage:

Management:

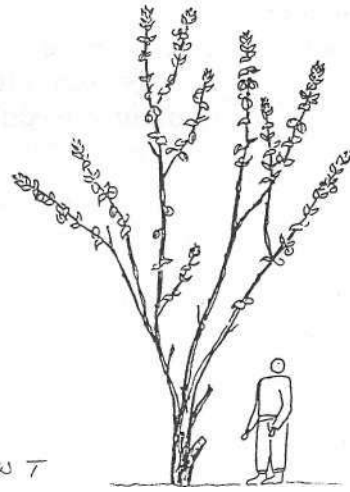
Remarks: All parts of this plant produce latex which can be dangerous to the eyes. It also contains a powerful heart poison (calotropin) which has been used to poison arrow heads. The strong inner bark fibres can be very useful and the plant has been cultivated for fibre in South America. The very light wood has been used as floats for fishing nets.



A. B.



fruit and seed



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