

Capparis tomentosa

Capparidaceae



Indigenous

Am: *Gumero*

Or: *Gumero, Harangama*

Ecology

Widespread in tropical Africa from Senegal through the Sahel to Eritrea and East Africa to South Africa and the Mascarene Islands. In Ethiopia, it is a shrub occurring in semi-arid and humid lowland, highland woodlands, wooded grassland, forest edges and scrub in Dry and Moist Kolla and Weyna Dega agroclimatic zones in nearly all regions, 500–2,300 m.

Uses

Firewood, medicine (roots, leaves, bark), live fence, fencing material (cut branches).

Description

A thorny shrub to 3 m or a climber reaching 10 m. Thorns small, curved back, in pairs beside leaves. LEAVES: Long and oval to 3–9 cm, grey-green, thick and leathery, on a short stalk, may be hairy below, slightly pink. FLOWERS: To 5 cm across with very many white stamens, 4 small white petals, 4 sepals. The ovary is on a stalk. Flowers are usually in groups. FRUIT: Hang down on long stalks to 5 cm, rounded 1–5 cm across, shiny orange-red, drying black, persisting on the bush.

Propagation

Seedlings, cuttings.

Seed

Treatment: Not necessary.

Storage: Stores well.

Management

Lopping. Layering for fencing.

Remarks

May become a serious weed unless controlled. Roots can be very poisonous. In Ethiopia, they are mixed with garlic and roots of *Justicia schimperiana* (= *Adhatoda schimperiana*) to form a juice that is believed to ward off the evil eye.



Photo: Patrick Maundu

