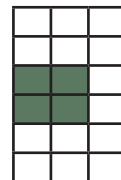


Carissa spinarum

(*C. edulis*)

Apocynaceae



Indigenous

Ag: *Aguami*

Am: *Agam*

Gmz: *Soha*

Or: *Agamsa, Hagamsa*

Sh: *Awawa*

Sm: *Orgabat*

Ecology

Widespread in Africa from Senegal to Somalia and south to Botswana and Mozambique. Also in Asia from Yemen to India. Grows in woodlands and forests where *Euphorbia*, *Acacia*, and *Croton* commonly occur in Dry and Moist Weyna Dega and Dega agroclimatic zones in all regions, 500–2600 m.

Uses

Firewood, food (fruit), medicine (roots), ornamental and soil conservation.

Description

A spiny shrub or small tree to 5 m or sometimes a liana up to 10 m long. **BARK:** Grey, smooth with straight woody spines to 5 cm, often in pairs, rarely branching. Milky latex. **LEAVES:** Opposite, leathery, shiny dark green to 5 cm, tip pointed, base rounded, stalk very short. **FLOWERS:** Fragrant, in pink-white terminal clusters, each flower to 2 cm, lobes overlap to the right. **FRUIT:** Rounded berries about 1 cm, purple-black when ripe, sweet and edible, 2–4 seeds.

Propagation

Seedlings (sow in pots), wildings, direct

sowing at site. Wildings often grow under parent bushes and may also be used.

Seed

Fresh seed germinate well; 28,000–30,000 seeds per kg.

Treatment: Not necessary.

Storage: Seed loses viability fairly quickly. Use fresh seed for best result.

Management

Fairly slow growing. Trim if grown as a fence. Improve more fleshy and juicy quality by selection.

Remarks

An important food and medicinal plant in Ethiopia. Both the unripe and ripe fruits are eaten whole. Much liked by both children and adults. It can be grown from seed to develop into an attractive and impenetrable hedge. It makes excellent firewood.



Photo: Patrick Maundu

