

Commiphora africana

Burseraceae

Indigenous

Common names: Ateso K: Ekadeli, etopojo.

Ecology: A shrub found all over Africa in the driest areas. It grows on rocky sites, clay or sand with minimal rainfall in open savannah or near desert. Typical of much thorn bush in Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya.

Uses: Firewood, utensils, carving (water troughs), drink (bark tea), medicine (roots, bark, fruit, resin), fodder (young shoots), gum-resin, live fence.

Description: Usually a spiny shrub but may become a tree to 10 m. Deciduous, **bare for many months**. BARK: **grey-green peeling to show green below**, when cut a **yellowish gum drips out, branchlets thorn-tipped**. LEAVES: soft, hairy and bright green, compound with **three leaflets**, central longest, edge wavy, fragrant when crushed, central leaflet much longer than the other two. FLOWERS: small, **red, in tight clusters**, often on thorns, on the bare tree. FRUIT: **pink-red**, soft, **about 1 cm, pointed**, stony seed inside.

Propagation: Large cuttings.

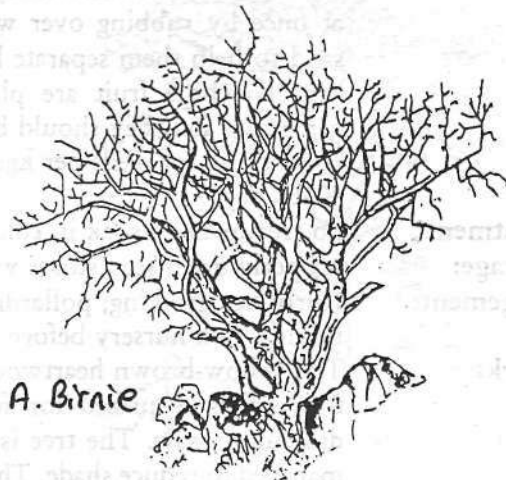
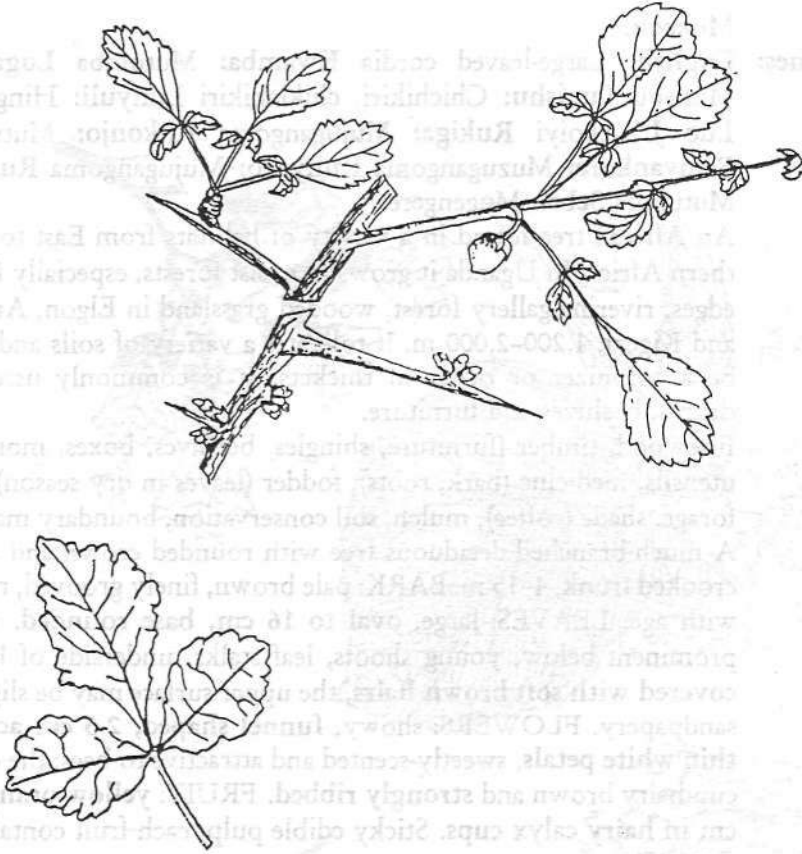
Seed: Only propagated by cuttings.

treatment:

storage:

Management: Slow growing; lopping.

Remarks: Leaves contain bitter tannin and so they are not browsed by cattle but they are important fodder for camels and goats. They come into leaf just before the rains. The cut branches take a long time to dry and the species is thus not ideal for firewood.



A. Birnie