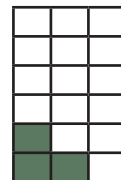


Cordeauxia edulis

Fabaceae



Indigenous

Eng: *Yeheb nut*

Sm: *Ehb, Qud, Quda*

Ecology

Found naturally in semi-arid bushland and scrub in sandy soils of the Bereha agroclimatic zones in eastern Ogaden in Harerge region and extending to Somalia, 0–600 m in Dry Kolla and Dry Bereha plus Moist Bereha agroclimatic zones. It has been introduced and cultivated in other countries. The roots go deep to tap underground water.

Uses

Firewood, food (seeds), fodder (foliage), bee forage, mulch, soil conservation, nitrogen fixation, live fence, dyes (red dye from leaves), tannin.

Description

A stiff erect evergreen shrub or small tree, 2 m, with red glands on stems and leaves. LEAVES: Leathery, compound, with 1–6 pairs of leaflets, each one to 3 cm long, oval-oblong, the underside covered with red glands, FLOWERS: Buds with glands, 5 yellow petals, over 1 cm long. FRUIT: Pods only 4–6 cm long with a thin upturned beak. Inside are 1–4 fat oval seeds, the “nuts”, each 2–4 cm long.

Propagation

Seedlings, self-seeding once established.

Seed

Before an age of 3 years a young plant may bear a few pods, but once 3–4 years old it will yield prolifically under good conditions. Good germination, over 80% when fresh. About 300 seed per kg.

Treatment: Not necessary.

Storage: Seeds are susceptible to insect attack so should not be stored for long.

Management

Slow growing during the initial stages while establishing its massive root system; young seedlings develop a strong tap root before shoots. Coppicing.

Remarks

The leaves have a high tannin content. It used to be a common tree in Somalia where the nuts are used as food by pastoralists and the leaves as tea. Now it has become rare due to over-exploitation during famine. A red dye is easily extracted from the young stems. As the seeds are well liked and nutritious, the tree has potential as a food crop in the driest areas, and it has already been tried in Kenya and Tanzania.

