

Cordia africana

Boraginaceae

Indigenous

Ar: *Gambil*

Bl: *Chergelo*

Km: *Ghunja*

Sh: *Madre*

Tg: *Awhi*

Tr: *Awhi*

- Ecology:** A widespread African tree extending as far as South Africa. It is common in forest, as a forest remnant in cultivated areas and is also used in coffee plantations. In Eritrea, it grows in the central midland plains, e.g. around Mai-aini, Egela names (river banks), Tselema, Seharti, Rora-mensa and Sabur, 750-2,000 m.
- Uses:** **Firewood, timber** (furniture, beehives, boxes, mortars, church drums), food (fruit), medicine (bark, roots), **fodder** (leaves), **bee forage, mulch**, soil conservation, ornamental, **shade**.
- Description:** A much-branched deciduous tree with rounded crown and often crooked trunk, to 25 m, from a short bole. **BARK:** Grey or pale brown, finely grooved but rough with age. **LEAVES:** **Large, oval, 20 x 15 cm, base rounded**, veins prominent below; young shoots, leaf stalks, underside of leaves covered with **soft brown hairs**. **FLOWERS:** Showy, **funnel shaped**, thin **white petals**, sweet scented and attractive to bees. **FRUIT:** **Yellowish, 1 cm in hairy cups**. Flesh sticky and edible, each fruit containing 4-6 seeds.
- Propagation:** Wildings, seedlings, direct sowing on site.
- Seed:** Germination rate often over 80%; slow germination. No. of cleaned and dried fruits (each with 4–6 seeds) per kg: 5,000-5,500.
- treatment:** None required, but depulping speeds up germination.
- storage:** Seed stores well for up to a year.
- Management:** Requires 5-7 months in a nursery before planting out. Easy to raise and fast growing. Pollarding, lopping, coppicing.
- Remarks:** The heartwood is hard and durable and takes a good polish so the timber is prized for furniture, but it can be twisted and difficult to saw. Plantations should be dense to encourage straight growth. A useful tree for homesteads and on crop land.

