

# Dalbergia melanoxydon

# Papilionoideae

Indigenous

Ar: Babanus

Bl: Shinara

Eng: African blackivood, African ebony

Hd: Abunusa

Km: Dekina

Nr: Aleden

Tg: Zebe

Tr: Alazeyen

- Ecology:** A small tree native to tropical Africa and India. Found associated with *Entada abyssinica* and *Combretum* spp. Prefers a high watertable, 900-1,700 m. In Eritrea, it is very common in the western lowlands between 500 and 1,700 m, e.g. in Tokombia, Molki, Antore, Augaro, Omhajer, Mehlab, Maaldi valley and Mai-lam.
- Uses:** **Firewood, timber** (construction), carving, medicine (bark, roots, leaves), fodder (fruit, leaves), bee forage, nitrogen fixation, **walking sticks.**
- Description:** A spiny shrub or tree much branched from the base, 5-12 m, the bole diameter no more than 20-30 cm, often twisted. Branchlets, **grey-white some becoming thorns and bearing the leaves.** BARK: Smooth, pale grey becoming rough, flaky and darker with age. LEAVES: Compound, on stalks to 20 cm long, leaflets 9-13, each leaflet **small, 1-2 cm, the tip rounded or notched.** FLOWERS: Very small and white in sweet-scented branched sprays, to 12 cm long. FRUIT: Bunches of thin **flat pods, to 7 cm long, papery and pointed both ends** with 1-2 seeds inside.
- Propagation:** Seedlings, wildings, cuttings, root suckers.
- Seed:** Good germination rates. Water sparingly so the seed does not rot. Number of seeds per kg: 6,000-16,000.
- treatment:** Not necessary.
- storage:** Seed stores well.
- Management:** Slow growing. Side prune to get a clear bole.
- Remarks:** The very hard, durable, termite-resistant, purple-black heartwood is very valuable for special uses such as musical instruments and carvings. The hard wood blunts tools so it is not suitable for furniture, etc.

