

Dichrostachys cinerea (D. glomerata)

Mimosaceae

Indigenous

Common names: **Ateso:** Etira, etirai **English:** Sickle bush **Luganda:** Muwanika **Luo A:** Okiro, okito **Luo L:** Atila, okutu-ipeti **Lusoga:** Luburyango **Runyankore:** Kalemanjovu.

Ecology: A hardy shrub occurring from West Africa to Ethiopia to South Africa. Found in a variety of habitats: grassland, river banks, rocky hillsides down to coastal plains. Widely distributed throughout Uganda on poor soils such as laterite outcrops in grasslands, woodlands and secondary forests, 700-1,500 m.

Uses: Firewood, charcoal, poles, posts, tool handles, medicine (leaves, roots), fodder (leaves, pods), bee forage, nitrogen fixation, soil conservation, fibre (bark), live fence, dry fence.

Description: A shrub or small tree 1-8 m with the typical feathery leaves of the Acacia group. **BARK:** thickly fibrous, young branchlets hairy. **THORNS:** up to 8 cm, **alternate** along branches, **slightly recurved, single**—may be quite short or absent. They are branchlets and may bear leaves. **LEAVES:** pinnate with 5-19 pairs of pinnae and **glands along the stalk;** underside of leaflets pale, stalks and leaflets hairy. **FLOWERS:** characteristic, **two coloured, top half with pink,** white or mauve filaments, **lower half with short yellow stamens.** They hang on a short stalk to 5 cm long. **FRUIT: brown, flat pods, twisted into strangely shaped clusters.** Pods rot on the ground to release about 4 seeds.

Propagation: Seedlings, wildings, direct sowing on site, root suckers.

Seed: The tree seeds prolifically when in open land. Germination is very good and fast after pretreatment.

treatment: immerse in hot water, allow to cool and soak for 24 hours,
storage: can be stored for several years at room temperature if kept dry and free from insects. Add ash to reduce insect damage.

Management: Slow growing; coppicing, lopping, pollarding.

Remarks: The tree is not planted near houses because it is very thorny. It can be an aggressive weed, has vigorous root suckers and can form a dense thicket. The timber is very heavy and hard but of quite small size. Pounded roots and leaves are used to treat epilepsy. Suitable for planting on degraded soils. It can be an indicator of overgrazing in low rainfall areas.

