

Euphorbia polyacantha

Euphorbiaceae

Indigenous

Ar: *Kerat*
Tr: *Tsaan*

Sh: *Mezba*

Tg: *Mezba*

Ecology: A spiny bush which grows in both dry deciduous and evergreen woodlands, 1,500-2,000 m. In Eritrea, this bush is common in the central highlands, e.g. on Ala plains and around Semenawibahri, Mehlab, Akkur, Gheleb and Nefasit. Prefers rocky sites and shallow soils in semi-arid lowlands.

Uses: **Medicine** (latex), ornamental, **soil conservation**, insecticide (crushing the stem in water), live fence.

Description: A **succulent shrub 1.5-2.0 m high**, broader than high, the dense erect branches make a **rounded or almost flat crown** (no leaves). Most of the **succulent spiny branches** arise at the base. They are **grey to dark green, 4-5-angled (to 7-angled) and 1.2-3.0 cm wide**, very shallowly segmented. A **spine shield is continuous along the stem ribs**, dark when young. **Pairs of spines** grow out of the spine shield, 4-8 mm long, 5-7 mm apart. **FLOWERS:** Small, yellow-green, grow from "eyes" exactly in between the spine pairs; clusters of 1-4 together. **FRUIT: 3-lobed, oblong capsules**, only 3-5 mm; **black-purple when ripe**, they contain rough grey oval seeds less than 2 mm long.

Propagation: Cuttings.

Seed:

treatment:

storage:

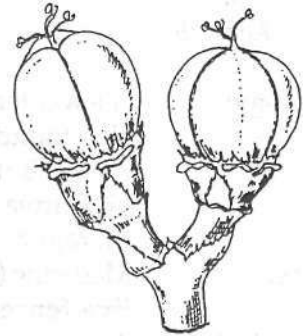
Management: Very easy to propagate.

Remark: It is sometimes planted as an ornamental in home gardens.

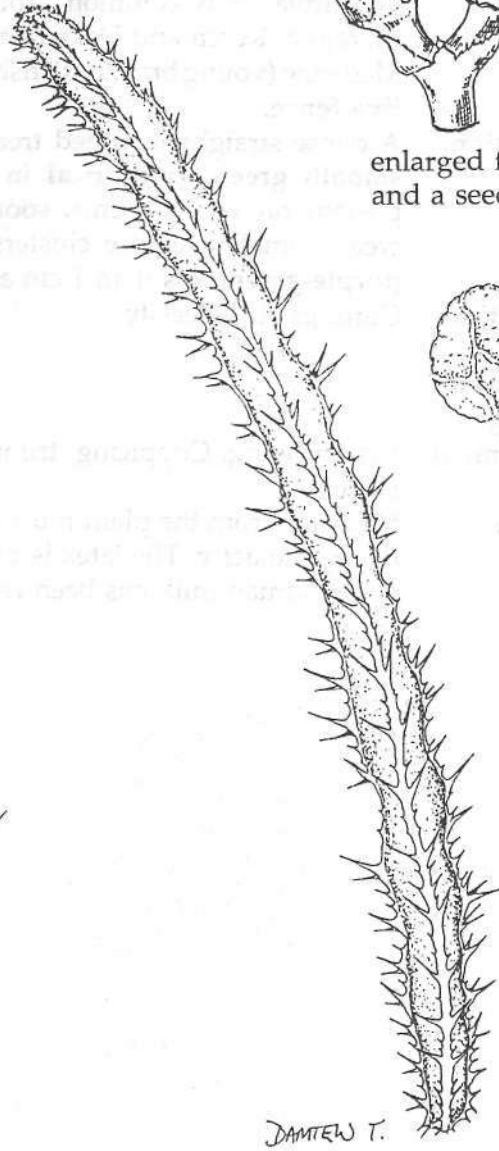
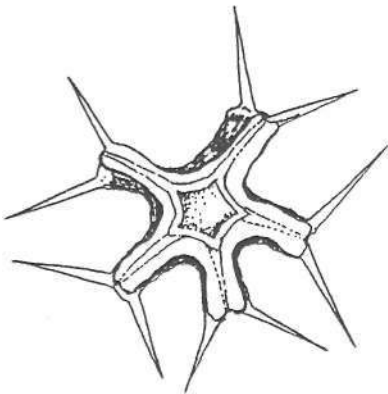
enlarged flowers



enlarged fruits and a seed



cross section of stem



DAMTEW T.