

Ficus thonningii

Moraceae

Africa

Sh: Gerina

Tg: Shibaka

Tr: Dalgus

Ecology: Widespread in Africa, 1,000-2,500 m, often starting as an epiphyte on another tree, then buttressed or multi-stemmed from the growth of aerial roots. Planted along streets and roads in Asmara and as single trees in some villages in the central highlands. Grows on a variety of soils.

Uses: Medicine (bark), fodder, mulch, **shade, ornamental**, fibres, glue, live fence, ceremonial.

Description: A deciduous tree to 12 m. **BARK:** Thin, **grey and smooth, often many aerial stem roots.** **LEAVES:** Very variable, **oval to 12 cm**, often smaller, **apex mostly rounded**, base rounded or tapering, shiny green, young leaves pale and hairy below **FRUIT:** In **axillary clusters at the ends of branches**, prominent on the bare tree, **round to 1.5 cm**, smooth or bumpy, **yellow or purple-red when ripe. Two small leafy bracts remain at the base of the fig.**

Propagation: Large cuttings normally used.

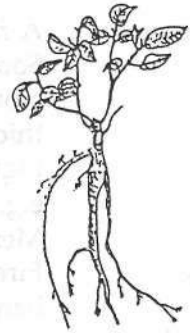
Seed: No. of seeds per kg: about 90,000.

treatment: Not necessary

storage: Seeds should not be stored.

Management: Fast growing from cuttings and better than seed; pollarding.

Remarks: The fruit is eaten by small mammals and birds—thus dispersing the seed. The species should be protected from browsing when young. Like all figs, the extensive root system penetrates into the smallest crack in the soil or buildings where water might accumulate, therefore do not plant near buildings as the roots may crack the foundations. Fig roots probably have a stronger suction force to draw in water than other trees—a reason why parasitic plants do not grow on fig trees.



young epiphytic seedling

