

Ficus vasta

Moraceae

Indigenous

Af: Maraito
Hd: Mentaro
Tg: Daero

Ar: Deleb
Nr: Shaile
Tr: Daero

Bl: Deghuna
Sh: Enaerto

Ecology: A fig tree of dry north and eastern Africa, the Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Saudi Arabia and into Uganda and Tanzania, found along rivers and in dry savannah, often forming stands or thickets. In Eritrea, it grows in the central and northern highlands as well as on the eastern and western escarpments, e.g. around Segenaiti, Dekemhare, Tselema, Semenawi-bahri, Mensa, Wogret and the Anseba river, 750-2,000 m.

Uses: Firewood, timber (utensils, furniture, carvings), food (figs), river-bank stabilization.

Description: A very large tree to 25 m with a spreading rounded crown, trunk often buttressed, occasionally an epiphyte. BARK: Smooth grey. **Young branches thick, with soft dense hairs**, 5-12 mm, yellow-white-brown, skin flaking when dry. LEAVES: Quite stiff, rough to the touch, **almost circular 8-25 x 4-23 cm**, tip rounded but often with a blunt point, base rounded, heart-shaped, **leaf stalk 3-12 cm, hairy**; hairy below with well-marked veins, the **2 outer veins reaching up to the middle of the leaf**, all forked clearly at the edge. FIGS: 1-2 together beside or just below leaves, **hardly stalked**, almost round, about 2 cm across when fresh, **green with pale spots when ripe, hairy, the opening clear**. Figs appear in conspicuous clusters on the branches.

Propagation: Cuttings, seedlings and wildings.

Seed: Produced in figs in large numbers, to be extracted and dried.

treatment: Not necessary.

storage: Can be stored up to two months.

Management: Lopping, pollarding.

Remarks: In its wild state *F. vasta* has provided food in times of famine. Therefore its cultivation could be encouraged. The figs are either eaten when half dry or dried completely, stored and eaten stewed. Plant at wide spacing.

