

Lawsonia inermis

Lythracea

Indigenous

Ar: *Hena*

Km: *Inna*

Tr: *Hena*

Bl: *Hena*

Sh: *Hena*

Eng: *Henna*

Tg: *Elam, Hina*

Ecology: A shrub widely distributed in northern, western and central Africa. It grows mainly along river courses and in semi-arid areas. In Eritrea, the tree is found wild but is also cultivated in home gardens on alluvial soils in the western lowlands as well as in the lower part of the eastern escarpment up to 1,350 m.

Uses: Firewood, medicine, **dye** (leaves), fodder (leaves), soil conservation, fibre (stem), live fence, **perfume**.

Description: A shrub or small tree to 4 m, sometimes spiny. **LEAVES: Small and oval, about 2-3 cm, opposite, often on short spine-tipped branchlets. FLOWERS: White, in long branching heads, sweet scented. FRUIT: Small brown capsules splitting into 4 parts.** Capsules about 6 mm diameter with persistent style.

Propagation: Seedlings, cuttings.

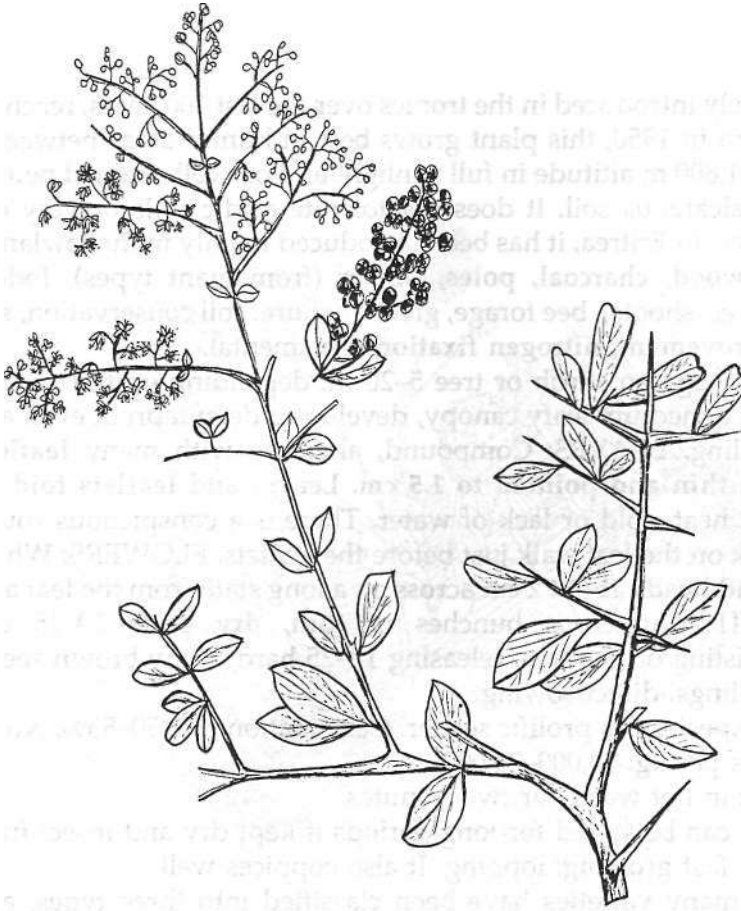
Seed: No. of seed per kg: about 100,000; germination rate up to 70%.

treatment: Not necessary

storage: Can only be stored for up to two months.

Management: Slow growing.

Remarks: The plant produces a volatile oil with a pleasant odour. An orange-red dye extracted from leaves and young shoots is used to dye clothes and leather, to decorate nails and skin of women, as well as to colour and condition hair (henna). The dye is released by mixing crushed leaves with citric or tartaric acid, lemon juice or tea. The fruit and flowers attract birds, and antelope browse the leafy branches.



enlarged fruit