

Millettia ferruginea

Fabaceae



Indigenous, endemic in Ethiopia

- Ag:** *Waggaru*
Am: *Birbira*
Gr: *Birbiraso*
Kf: *Bibero, Yago*
Or: *Asra, Dedatu, Ingidicho, Sotellu*
Sd: *Engidicho Engbe diksho*
Sm: *Aladu*
Tg: *Birbira*
Wt: *Zagie, Zagiya*

Ecology

A tree confined to Ethiopia (endemic), found in upland forests, rain forests and forest remnants in Shoa, Tigray, Kefa, Sidamo, Ilubabor, Gojam, Wolega, Bale, Harerge and Gonder regions. It performs well in Moist and Wet Kolla as well as Dry, Moist and Wet Weyna Dega agroclimatic zones, 1,000–2,500 m.

Uses

Firewood, timber (local construction), tool handles, household utensils, shade, fish poison (ground-up seeds).

Description

A large shady tree to 35 m. LEAVES: Compound, up to 13 pairs of leaflets plus one at the tip, each leaflet to 9 cm long, pointed, hairy below. FLOWERS: Large and violet, on stalks to 30 cm long, calyx with golden-brown to black hairs, the flower 2–3 cm long and the upright standard petal silky hairy outside. FRUIT: Large flat pods to 27 cm long and 3 cm across, curved, with brown hairs when young, less hairy when mature. Pods break open when dry to set free 5–10 seeds.

Propagation

Seedlings, direct sowing at site.

Seed

A prolific seeder, about 500/kg unclean

Treatment: Not necessary, germination starts in 8 days and culminates 11 days after sowing.

Storage: Can be stored for 2 months

Management

Coppicing, pollarding.

Remarks

There are two subspecies, one confined to the north of the country and the other in Sidamo. Trees from central and western Ethiopia show a mixture of the characters of these two species. This is an important shade tree for peasant farmers growing coffee.

