

Mimosa scabrella (M. bracatinga)

Mimosaceae

S.E. Brazil

Common names: **English:** Bracatinga.

Ecology: A slender tree native to the cool plains of south-east Brazil but now widely grown in north-east Latin America, Central America and the Caribbean as well as in Zaire, Senegal and Ethiopia, 0-2,400 m. Grows in most soils except those that are waterlogged. In Uganda, it has recently been introduced and is being tried in Kabale District.

Uses: Firewood, timber, poles, shade (for coffee), ornamental, mulch, nitrogen fixation, soil conservation.

Description: A thornless tree to 15 m with a straight bole and broad crown. Shrubby varieties are 4-7 m with a dense crown, many parts are covered with **short dense hairs**. **LEAVES:** compound, **very small, feathery**. **FLOWERS:** small, white or yellow in heads. **FRUIT:** **narrow, flat pods, separated into joints** which split on drying.

Propagation: Seedlings, direct sowing on site.

Seed: No. of seeds per kg: about 70,000.

treatment: soak in cold water for 48 hours.

storage:

Management: Fast growing (5 m in 14 months); coppicing, lopping.

Remarks: Useful for soil improvement (improved fallow) since the nitrogen-rich litter is abundant and decomposes well. It does not intercrop well as it competes with crops. In Brazil, plantations were harvested for fuel three years after planting. The pulp can be used for paper.

