

# Oncoba spinosa

*Flacourtiaceae*

Indigenous

Ar: *Ancob*

Tg: *Ugot, Huguat*

Tr: *Fufjusto*

**Ecology:** A small spiny tree well distributed throughout tropical Africa over a wide range of altitude north to Arabia and south to South Africa. In Eritrea, it grows on the eastern escarpment and in the northern part of the central highlands, e.g. around Semenawibahri and Mensa, 700-1,800 m, being most common in riverine forests or in bushland.

**Uses:** **Firewood**, timber (furniture), food (fruit), medicine (roots), ornamental.

**Description:** A small spiny shrub or tree to 5 m, occasionally 8 m, with sharp spreading **straight spines to 5 cm** beside leaves. **BARK:** Grey, fairly smooth, the young branches dotted with white breathing pores. **LEAVES:** Alternate, **dark shiny green, leathery, broadly oval, about 8 cm long**, the edge **finely toothed, teeth sometimes rounded**, and very few at the base, narrowed abruptly to a short stalk, net veins very clear between 7-11 pairs side veins. **FLOWERS:** **Fragrant and solitary**, up to **8 cm across, with 5-20 overlapping petals**, a conspicuous **mass of orange-yellow stamens** and a **cream-green central stigma**, rounded, 4 mm across, **funnel-shaped, hardly divided**, 3-4 concave sepals make fat green buds. **FRUIT:** Smooth, hard and round, to **6 cm diameter**, a **yellow-brown woody box** containing shiny brown seeds in a dry yellow pulp which is sour and hardly edible.

**Propagation:** Seedlings, wildings.

**Seed:**

**treatment:** Break up and mash the fruit to extract the seed and nick the seed coat.

**storage:** It can be stored for some years if kept dry, cool and free from insects.

**Management:**

**Remarks:** The roots have been used for treatment of dysentery. When seeds dry in the fruit, they can be used as rattles by children and dancers.

