

# *Oncoba spinosa*

Flacourtiaceae

## Indigenous

**Agn:** *Adiquala*

**Am:** *Ekuku, Tsewa*

**Eng:** *Wild rose, Snuff-box tree*

**Gmz:** *Asisa*

**Or:** *Akukku, Aboha, Daggoo, Kokolfe, Korkoro*

**Sm:** *Bulisanza*

**Tg:** *Egot*

## Ecology

A spiny tree or shrub well distributed throughout tropical Africa over a wide range of altitude north to the Arabian peninsula and south to South Africa. In Ethiopia, it grows in Moist Bereha and Moist to Wet Kolla agroclimatic zones in Tigray, Shoa, Arsi, Wolega, Ilubabor, Kefa, Sidamo, Bale and Harerge regions, 400-1,800 m.

## Uses

Timber (inlays, cabinet work), food (fruit), medicine (root decoctions), oil (from seed; used for paints and varnish).

## Description

A semi-deciduous spiny shrub or small tree 4–10 m, much branched to a rounded bushy crown. **BARK:** Smooth, grey or brown, young branches speckled with lenticel dots, becoming dark brown, scaly with age. Branches with straight, axillary spines to 8 cm, slender and sharp, while the main trunk may have shorter compound thorns. **LEAVES:** Alternate, leathery, strong shiny green, often re-curved, broadly oval, about 8 cm long, margin with small rounded or pointed teeth, sometimes few, base tapering to a short stalk, tip well

pointed. **FLOWERS:** Solitary, showy and fragrant, white or pale pink, up to 9 cm across, on stalks 1–2 cm, with 8–10 white overlapping petals about 3 cm long, twice the size of 4 sepal lobes, a mass of golden stamens in the centre, the green-cream central stigma knob about 4 mm across (seen clearly on young fruit). **FRUIT:** Round, shiny red-brown when ripe, 5–6 cm in diameter, the hard 'shell' marked with 8 faint lines, the old calyx persisting. Inside, shiny brown oil-rich seeds lie in a dry thick yellow-brown pulp, edible but sour.

## Propagation

Seedlings and wildings.

## Seed

Break up and mash the fruit to extract the seed. 55,000—65,000 per kg.

**Treatment:** Not necessary but soaking in cold water may hasten germination. The seedlings require about 4 months to attain suitable size for planting.

**Storage:** Seed store well.

## Management

Coppicing,

## Remarks

Root decoctions are used locally for treating intestinal and urinary complaints. The seeds are too difficult to extract in an amount sufficient for commercial oil extraction. Wood is hard, light brown and taking good polish.



