

Parkinsonia aculeata

Caesalpinioideae

Tropical America

Bl: Shewina

Eng: Jerusalem thorn

Tg: Shewit hagai

- Ecology:** Widely cultivated at medium altitudes, this tree tolerates strongly alkaline or saline soils and poor sandy eroded soil, but not flooding, 300-1,700 m. In Eritrea, it is cultivated in Ghinda, Mendefera, Adi-quala and Nakfa town.
- Uses:** **Firewood, charcoal, fodder** (pods, young branches), bee forage, mulch, **soil conservation, ornamental**, shade, windbreak, live fence.
- Description:** A spiny shrub or small tree, usually 5-8 m, light, feathery foliage and a low crown, sometimes deciduous in the dry season. **LEAVES:** Groups of thin **winged leaf stalks to 30 cm with well-spaced tiny leaflets**. The long thin branchlets have sharp thorns beside the leaves, about 1 cm long. **FLOWERS:** Very fragrant, **bright yellow with orange stamens**, on spikes to 15 cm. **FRUIT:** Bunches of **woody** pale brown pods, narrow, **constricted between seeds**, pointed tips.
- Propagation:** Seedlings, direct sowing.
- Seed:** The species is a prolific seeder. Germination rate 30-70%. No. of seeds per kg: 11,000-15,000.
- treatment:** Soak seed in hot water and allow to cool overnight.
- storage:** Seed stores well for long periods in cool, dry, closed containers.
- Management:** Fast growing; pollarding. Seedlings are susceptible to attack by termites and so young seedlings should be protected.
- Remarks:** It is a good species for reclamation of degraded sites, but it can become a serious weed due to its prolific seeding.

