

Parkinsonia aculeata

Fabaceae



Tropical America

Am: *Filfile, Ye eyerusalem eshob*

Eng: *Jerusalem thorn*

Ecology

The natural range of this plant is the semi-arid areas of the southern United States and into Argentina. It has been grown in Africa and South Asia. Tolerates strongly alkaline or saline soils and poor sandy eroded soil, but not flooding. In Ethiopia it is widely cultivated at medium altitudes, especially in Sidamo region. Also does well in arid and semi-arid areas in Dry and Moist Bereha, Dry, Moist and Wet Kolla and Weyna Dega agroclimatic zones, 300–1,700 m.

Uses

Firewood, charcoal, fodder (pods, young branches), bee forage, shade, ornamental, mulch, soil conservation, 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, 10 cm long, narrow, constricted between seeds, pointed tips.

Propagation

Seedlings, direct sowing at site.

Seed

The species is a prolific seeder. Germination rate 30–70%. 11,000–15,000 seed per kg.

Treatment: Immerse in hot water, allow to cool and soak 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. Ash can be sprinkled around seedlings to deter termites, alternatively use other physical or biological methods.

Remarks

Extensively used in Ethiopia. It is a good species for rehabilitating eroded land.

