

Tropical America

**Common names:** **English:** 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 and is almost naturalized in some places. In Uganda it is widely cultivated in dry areas, especially in North Eastern Region. It tolerates strongly alkaline or saline soils and poor sandy eroded soil, but not flooding. It is also grown around Kasese.

**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 high, 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. Pods contain 6 or more dark brown oval seeds and remain on the tree.

**Propagation:** Seedlings (sow seeds in pots), direct sowing on site.

**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 sealed containers in a cool place.

**Management:** Fast growing. Pollarding. Seedlings are susceptible to attack by termites and so young seedlings should be protected. Ash can be used to reduce damage.

**Remarks:** It is a good species for rehabilitating eroded land.

