

Piliostigma thonningii

Caesalpinioideae

Indigenous

Km: Jedeba

Amam-gemel

Eng: Camel's foot tree, Monkey bread

- Ecology:** A small dense semi-deciduous tree found all over sub-humid Africa from the west to South Africa occurring in wooded grassland and on a variety of soils. In Eritrea, it grows at medium to low altitudes in deciduous woodland and wooded grassland, often in river valleys or on flood plains, e.g. around Dembelas, Meraguz, Shambuko and Tokombia, 900-1,600 m.
- Uses:** **Firewood**, charcoal, **poles**, timber (houses), **food** (pods), drink (leaves, pods), fodder (pods, shoots), bee forage, **medicine** (leaves, bark, roots, pods), mulch, soil conservation, ornamental, tannin, dye (pods, seeds, bark, roots), rope (bark, root fibres).
- Description:** A rounded deciduous tree, 3-5 m, branches twisted (occasionally climbing). **BARK:** Thick, dark brown and rough, fibrous within. Dark red if cut. **LEAVES:** **Large and bilobed**, a small bristle in the deep notch, often folded along midrib, **leathery**, pale green, to 12 cm long, lower surface brown **hairy, in between many raised veins**. **FLOWERS:** **White, fragrant**, in heads, 10-20 cm. **FRUIT:** **Flat brown and woody pods**, 15-20 cm long, persisting on the tree but finally decaying on the ground to free pea-sized seeds. Pulp surrounding the seed can be eaten.
- Propagation:** Seedlings.
- Seed:** The tree produces many seeds with a good germination rate. No. of seeds per kg: +7,300. Seeds difficult to extract.
- treatment:** Soak in cold water for 24 hours.
- storage:** Can be stored for several years if kept cool, dry and insect free.
- Management:** Fairly fast growing on good sites; coppicing.
- Remarks:** A good tree for intercropping. The pulp surrounding the seeds is edible and under famine conditions leaves, crushed green pods and seeds have been eaten. Pods and seeds give a blue dye and roasted seeds a black dye.

