

Pterolobium stellatum

Caesalpinioideae

Indigenous

Bl: Kentetef

Tg: Kontetefe

Tr: Kontetefe

Ecology: A genus of climbing shrubs from Arabia to South Africa, often forming thickets in upland dry evergreen forest margins and clearings, upland bushland, Acacia woodland and along rivers, 1,300-2,300 m. It is common in Eritrea.

Uses: Firewood, fodder (leaves), **live fence**, ornamental, **dye** (leaves, used to colour mats made from Doum palm leaves).

Description: A strong climber, shrub or small tree with reflexed prickles on both stems and leaves. Older stems woody, with thickened knobs. **LEAVES:** Twice divided, 8-12 pairs pinnae each having **9-14 pairs leaflets, oblong, 4-12 mm. Leaf stalks armed with prickles in twos or threes below or scattered singly.** **FLOWERS:** Small, **cream-white, sweet smelling**, borne on several **terminal spikes 5-13 cm long**, seen clear of the leaves. **FRUIT:** **Crimson red-purple-brown**, the characteristic fruit has **one oval seed and a wing 2-4 cm.**

Propagation: Cuttings, seedlings, wildings.

Seed:

treatment: Soak in hot water for 5 minutes, allow to cool and continue soaking for 24 hours.

storage: Can be stored for more than a year in air-tight containers.

Management: Pruning.

Remarks: The red fruit of Pterolobium high up in trees may be mistaken for blossom. The plant competes strongly with Opuntia and therefore can be useful for controlling Opuntia in areas where the latter has become a weed.

