

Rhamnus prinoides

Rhamnaceae

Indigenous

Sh: Geseha

Tg: Ghesho

Ecology: A small plant of wet rain forests well distributed in Africa. In Eritrea, it is widespread and locally cultivated from medium to high altitudes, in grasslands, in rain forests and on the margins of evergreen forests, 1,000-2,500 m, e.g. in Semenawi-bahri (Sabur), Enda-dashim church compound, home gardens in Asmara and on Mt. Bizen.

Uses: Firewood, medicine (leaves, roots), **flavouring**, local **beer** (leaves).

Description: An evergreen shrub or small tree to 7 m which may climb over other bushes. It has slender stems and drooping branches. **BARK:** Grey-brown, dark with age, smooth but **clearly dotted with breathing pores**. **LEAVES:** Alternate, long oval to 10 cm, **shiny dark green above with a raised vein network, tip sharply pointed**, edge finely toothed, base narrowed to a stalk. **FLOWERS:** Small, yellow-green with 5 **sepals**, single or 2-10 in a group on thin stalks. **FRUIT:** Rounded, **3-part berries** on a 2 cm drooping stalk, about 8 mm, **shiny red**, turning **purple-black**, 3 seeds inside.

Propagation: Seedlings.

Seed: Germinates readily when sown fresh.

treatment: Break up and crush the fruit to release the seed.

storage: Stores well in air-tight containers.

Management: Coppicing, cultivation, weeding and irrigation.

Remarks: It is widely planted in gardens. The leaves are used to add flavour to the local drinks *suwa* and *mies* which are brewed from fermented barley, sorghum or finger millet.

