

Rhus natalensis

Anacardiaceae

Indigenous

Bl: Mechecho

Sh: Atami

Tg: Tetale

Tr: Shamutet

Ecology: A bush or tree widespread in Africa at dry forest margins and in wooded grassland. In Eritrea, **it** grows in wooded savannah, at forest edges and in lowland woodland throughout the country, 1,600-2,400 m, usually associated with *Rhus abyssinica*. It is very common on the eastern and western escarpments, e.g. around Semenawi-bahri, Debubawi-bahri, Rora-mensa, Rora-habab and the upper Anseba river.

Uses: Firewood, **charcoal**, tools, **farm tools**, food (fruit), medicine (leaves), bee forage, toothbrushes (stems).

Description: A many-branched shrub or tree, sometimes tending to scramble, up to 8 m in height. BARK: Grey, often almost white, branchlets pale and dotted with breathing pores, **branches angular**. LEAVES: 3-foliolate, the central leaflet largest to 9 cm, **usually dark green**, rather **leathery**, hairless, sometimes toothed, very variable, **wider towards the tip**, narrowed to the base, on a stalk 2-4 cm. FLOWERS: Green-yellow in loose heads to 15 cm. FRUIT: Oblong to bean-shaped, smooth, **red with thin flesh** and a waxy covering, about 5 mm, edible. The dry papery fruit soon fall.

Propagation: Seedlings, wildings.

Seed:

treatment: Not necessary.

storage: Stores well in air-tight containers.

Management: Coppicing.

Remarks: The firewood produces a lot of sparks when it burns making it inconvenient for heating and cooking.

