

Sapium ellipticum

Euphorbiaceae

Indigenous

Gm: *Bal*
Kf: *Shedo*
Or: *Bosoka, Wagisa*
Sd: *Gancho*
Tg: *Berberi-islamay*

Ecology

A tree of secondary scrub that fringes forest and forest edges. It extends from West Africa to Eritrea and Ethiopia and south to South Africa. In Ethiopia, it grows along streams in deciduous woodland and in moist montane forests in the humid lower parts of the western highlands of Moist and Wet Kolla and Weyna Dega agroclimatic zones of Tigray, Gondar, Gojam, Wolega, Ilubabor, Shewa, Kefa, and Sidamo regions, 1,000–2,200 m. Common at the edges of evergreen forest and in wooded ravines.

Uses

Firewood, farm tools, tool handles, fodder (leaves).

Description

A small- to medium-sized deciduous tree to 12 m, occasionally reaching 20 m. BARK: Light brown to almost black, rough, branches tending to droop. White latex only seen when young parts are cut. LEAVES: Long, oval, dark above, paler below, turning dark red before falling, to 14 cm long, tip pointed, edge irregularly toothed, midrib and veins raised below, about 10 pairs of side veins; base narrow or rounded to a 1–2 cm stalk. FLOWERS: No petals or sepals. Flowers catkin-like in spikes 5–10 cm long, the upper part with

tiny male flowers each with yellow stamens; 2–5 rounded female flowers at the base, larger, on longer stalks. FRUIT: Two-part red capsules about 1 cm across, topped with remains of style. The capsule finally opens to release seeds. Seeds often eaten by insect larvae.



Propagation

Seedlings, wildings, direct sowing at site.

Seed

Collected in capsules which are cracked to extract seed.

Treatment: Not necessary.

Storage: Seed can be stored for long periods.

Management

Coppicing, pollarding, lopping.

Remarks

The leaves are protein-rich and good for livestock fodder.

