

Senna alexandrina (Cassia alexandrina)

Caesalpinioideae

Indigenous

Af: *Sanu*

Ar: *Sanna makka*

Eng: *Alexandrian senna*

Hd: *Embirka*

Tg: *Sono*

Tr: *Sanu*

Ecology: A shrub in semi-desert scrub and grassland, particularly on floodplains and shore lines. This species grows from the central Sahara eastwards to India and southwards to Kenya. In Eritrea, it grows mostly in the eastern and north-western lowlands, 0-900 m, e.g. around Sheib, Dogali, Afabet and Molober.

Uses: **Soil conservation, medicine** (leaves, pods).

Description: An annual woody herb or shrub, 1-4 m, with few branches, hairy when young. **LEAVES:** Compound, on stalks 5-15 cm, with **4-9 pairs of grey-green leaflets**, each **narrow oval 2-6 cm**, shortly stalked, slightly hairy, the **tip sharply pointed**. **FLOWERS:** In **erect spikes** 5-30 cm long, 5 greenish sepals overlap **5 bright orange-yellow petals** with well-marked veins, 10 stamens of three sizes. **FRUIT:** **Flat oblong pods, papery cream-yellow**, 3-7 cm long, slightly curved, **dark flat seeds are visible inside**, finally set free when pod splits.

Propagation: Seedlings, wildings.

Seed:

treatment:

storage

Management:

Remarks: A traditional and widely used purgative, this species is grown commercially in the Sudan and India. In the Sudan, the crop grows on poor sandy soils with some irrigation. Pastoralists in Eritrea collect the leaves and sell them in the market for use as a purgative.

