

Senna alexandrina

(*Cassia alexandrina*)

Fabaceae



Indigenous

Af: *Sanu*

Or: *Muka-arba*

Ag: *Senno*

Sm: *Jelalo-jel*

Eng: *Alexandrian senna*

Tg: *Seno, Utekki*

Ecology

A shrub in semi-desert scrub, *Acacia-Commiphora* bushland and grassland, particularly on floodplains and shorelines.

This species grows from central Sahara eastwards to India and southwards to Kenya. It is found in Dry and Moist Bereha and Dry and Moist Kolla agroclimatic zones of eastern Welo and Harerge regions and in the Afar plains, 0–1,000 m.

Uses

Farm tools, medicine (leaves, pods), soil conservation.

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: No need

Storage:

Management

Need to reduce lower branches to get better stem growth.

Remarks

There are two varieties in Ethiopia. A traditional and widely used purgative, variety *alexandrina* is grown commercially in the Sudan and India. In the Sudan, the crop grows on poor sandy soils with some irrigation.



A. Birnie