

Vernonia amygdalina

Compositae

Indigenous

Eng: *Bitter leaf, Tree vernonia*

Tg: *Grawa*

Ecology: A woody shrub of sub-Saharan Africa from west to east and also in Yemen. It is found in a wide range of bushland, woodland and forest in most parts of Eritrea, 750-2,500 m. It is common around houses, especially in Asmara and Senate, and along river banks.

Uses: **Firewood**, charcoal, food (leaves), fodder, **bee forage**, **medicine** (roots, bark, leaves), mulch, soil improvement, ornamental, **live fence**, toothbrushes (stems), stakes, leaves are used to scour pots used for making local beer (*sewa*).

Description: A single-stemmed shrub to 3 m, sometimes a tree to 10 m with a wide bole. **BARK**: Pale grey then rust-dark brown, rather rough, flaking later, branches brittle. **LEAVES**: Alternate, rather coarse and rough, oval, up to 20 x 5 cm, **tapering at both ends**, dark green above, **soft pale hairs below**, edge may be widely but regularly toothed. **FLOWERS**: White-green-pink, each only 6 mm across, in dense branching rounded heads **to 30 cm across**, sweet scented in the evening. **FRUIT**: Tiny seeds with stiff white hairs.

Propagation: Cuttings, seedlings.

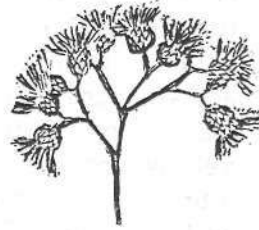
Seed:

treatment: Not necessary.

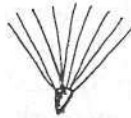
storage:

Management: Medium to fast growing, coppicing.

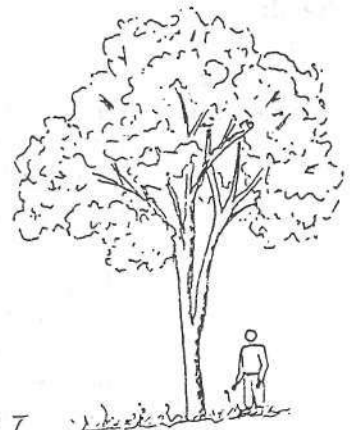
Remarks: The wood is termite-resistant making the branches useful for fences, support for earth works and stakes. The dried stems are light but strong. The leaves and bark are bitter but have several medicinal uses. This is a very valuable tree for bees, making dark aromatic honey.



flower heads



seed



JAMTEW T