

# Ziziphus mucronata

Rhamnaceae



## Indigenous

**Ag:** *Geba*  
**Am:** *Ado qurqura, Foch*  
**Eng:** *Buffalo-thorn*  
**Or:** *Ado-qurqura*  
**Sm:** *Eddi-shebel, Harkey*  
**Tg:** *Gaba-harmaz;*  
**Wt:** *Gammo-gadie*

## Ecology

Widely distributed in drier parts of Africa from Senegal east to the Arabian peninsular and south to South Africa and Madagascar. It grows in dry temperate and tropical climates and is adaptable to a variety of soils. In Ethiopia, it grows in *Acacia-Terminalia*, *Acacia-Balanites* and *Boswellia* woodlands and bushlands, on alluvial soils, and in dry riverine forests in all regions. It does well in Bereha and Dry, Moist and Wet Kolla and Weyna Dega agroclimatic zones of almost all regions, 100–2,100 m.

## Uses

Firewood, charcoal, timber (farm tools, local construction), food (fruit), medicine (roots, fruit), shade, live fence, fencing material (dry branches).

## Description

A semi-deciduous shrub or tree to 15 m, sometimes scrambling over other plants, usually armed with strong spines, paired with one straight, one recurved spine (“thumb pointer”). BARK: Dark grey-brown, only smooth when young. LEAVES: Hairless and shiny, a similar green both sides, 3–6 cm long, the edge

with regular rounded teeth to a pointed tip, the base rounded, often very unequal, 3 main veins clear below, vein network raised above. FLOWERS: Very small, yellow-green, crowded in heads by leaves. FRUIT: Rounded to 2 cm across, the skin dark red-brown when ripe, in stalked bunches, very acid pulp around the stone, hardly edible, conspicuous on the bare tree.

## Propagation

Seedlings, direct sowing at site.

## Seed

A prolific seeder. 700-1,100 stones per kg. Each stone contains 1—3 seed (multi-germ).

**Treatment:** Remove the flesh, crack the cover or soak in cold water for 6 hours.

**Storage:** Uncracked stones can be stored for long periods (1 year).

## Management

Pollarding, lopping, coppicing. Produces root suckers. The species is difficult to handle due to its many hooked spines.

## Remarks

The yellow-pink wood is tough and bends well (bows) and although it is termite resistant it is not very durable in the ground. Livestock and wild animals eat the fruit. Seed matures from September to October.

