

# Ziziphus mucronata

# Rhamnaceae

Indigenous

**Common names:** **Arusha:** oloilahi; **Bende:** kagobole; Eng: buffalo thorn; **Gogo:** mnyagwe, mnyangwe-mwaha; **Goro:** ghal-landi; **Hehe:** mtanula; **Kuria:** msarakanga; **Lugu:** mlagala; **Maasai:** ol oilale; **Nguu:** mgagawe, muguguni; **Nyam:** kagowole, kalembo, mgugunwa; **Sangu:** mtanula; **Suku:** mgugunu; **Zara:** mgegewa; **Zigua:** mgagawe; **Zinza:** mukwatanzumula.

**Ecology:** Widely distributed in drier tropical Africa and grows in a variety of soils. It grows in both temperate and tropical climates but most common in dry areas. In Tanzania it occurs from the coast up to 2,000 m inland and is often riverine.

**Uses:** Firewood, charcoal, building poles, medicine (roots, leaves), fodder (fruit), live fence.

**Description:** A wickedly armed scrambler, shrub or small tree to 7 m with drooping tangled branches and thorns. The strong, sharp thorns are in pairs, one straight to 2 cm, the other smaller and recurved with the leaves arising between the two thorns ("thumb-pointer" thorns). **BARK:** grey to dark grey, smooth at first becoming rough and fissured with age. **LEAVES:** shiny and thin, the same green both sideds, 3-6 cm long, base rounded, often very unequal sided, the edge with regular rounded teeth, a pointed tip, 3 main veins clear below. **FLOWERS:** very small, yellowish, in heads about 1.5 cm across. **FRUIT:** rounded, dark reddish-brown when ripe, the pulp very acid and scarcely edible, in stalked bunches.

**Propagation:** Seedlings, direct sowing, root suckers.

**Seed info.:** Number of seeds per kg: 500-2,000.

**treatment:** remove the flesh and soak in cold water for 6 hours.

**storage:** seed can be stored for up to 12 months.

**Management:** Fast growing for dry areas; lopping, pollarding, coppicing. The species is difficult to handle due to its many hooked spines.

**Remarks:** An important species in dry areas and widely liked for medicinal use. Poultices are made from roots and leaves and used to treat boils and skin infections and stomach and chest complaints. The yellow-pink wood is tough and bends well (bows). Livestock and wild animals eat the fruit.

