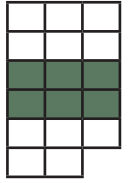


Acacia lahai

Fabaceae



Indigenous

Ag: *Tsivi*
Am: *Wittie, Cheba*
Eng: *Red thorn acacia*
Gm: *Qeretor*
Or: *Burquqge, Derot, Lafto, Sondi, Garbi*
Tg: *Lahay*
Wt: *Guganta*

Ecology

An upland acacia found in Uganda, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya and Tanzania in wooded grassland and woodland of cool, moist areas, in Ethiopia preferring Moist and Wet Weyna Dega and Dega agroclimatic zones of western Tigray, western Welo, Gonder, Gojam, Shoa, Wolega, Harerge and Kefa regions, at high altitudes, 1,700–2,600 m.

Uses

Firewood, charcoal, timber (heavy construction, bridges), posts, medicine (bark), nitrogen fixation, shade, dye (bark).

Description

The dark trunk holds up a very flat-topped tree to 15 m. **BARK:** Grey to dark brown, rough, grooved, branchlets brown-purple, hairy. **THORNS:** Usually straight, grey-brown, small to 7 cm. **LEAVES:** Compound, leaf stalk 2–8 cm with 6–15 pairs of pinnae, leaflets tiny, pointed. **FLOWERS:** In cream-yellow spikes to 7 cm, no stalk, flowering branchlets covered with red gland dots. **FRUIT:** Short pods, straight or curved, up to 7 cm by 3 cm wide, shiny brown, splitting on the tree to set free seed.

Propagation

Seedlings, direct sowing at site, wildings.

Seed

Many seeds are damaged by insects while still in their pods. These can be separated from good seeds by immersion in water; the bad seeds float. Around 4,000 seed per kg.

Treatment: Immerse in hot water, allow to cool and soak for 24 hours before sowing to break seed dormancy. Alternatively nick seed coat.

Storage: Seed can be stored for long periods. Add ash to reduce insect damage.

Management

Lopping. Leave scattered trees to provide some shade in pastures.

Remarks

The tree has a broad canopy and is often left in wheat and barley fields for shade. Bark crushed in water can be sprinkled on hot pots to colour them red. In herbal medicine, the bark is used to treat skin eruptions and for clearing toxemia.



Photo: Patrick Maundu

