Acacia lahai *Mimosoideae*

Indigenous

Common names: **Arusha:** melelek, ormelelek; Eng: red thorn; **Maasai** melelek, ormelelek.

Ecology: One of the highland umbrella thorns, 1,500-2,500 m. Ofter left for shade in pastureland. In Tanzania locally abundan on the Maasai highlands in the north, scattered in som< parts of the Rift Valley and in woodlands with a cool mois climate.

Uses: Firewood, charcoal, timber (heavy construction, bridges) posts, shade, dye (bark).

Description: A conspicuously **flat-topped tree** to 15 m. BARK: grey t(dark brown, rough, grooved, branchlets brown, hairy THORNS: straight, grey-brown, small but up to 7 cm long LEAVES: compound, **leaf stalk 2-8 cm with 6-15 pair: pinnae** bearing many tiny **pointed** leaflets. FLOWERS **cream-yellow spikes to 7 cm,** flowering **branchlets covere< with red gland dots.** FRUIT: **short and wide pods, to 7 cm** straight or curved, shiny brown, splitting on the tree to se free seed.

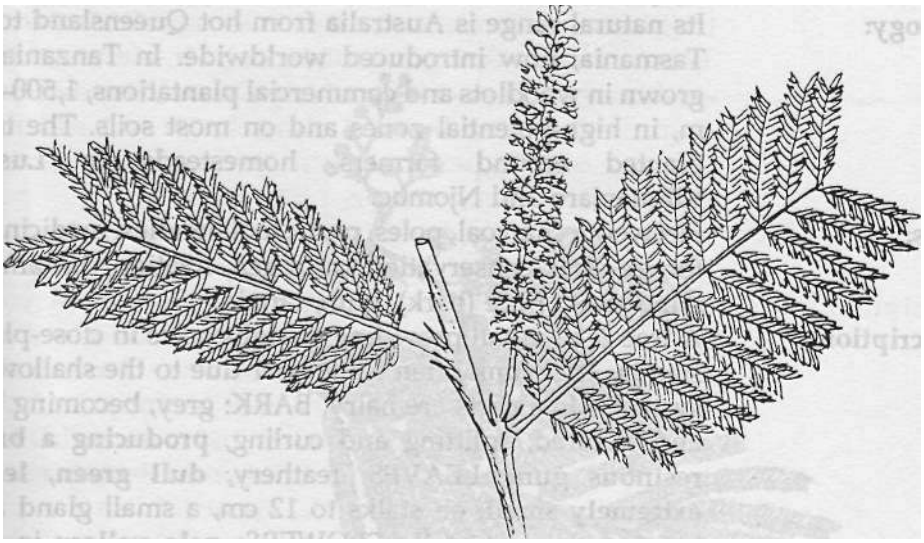
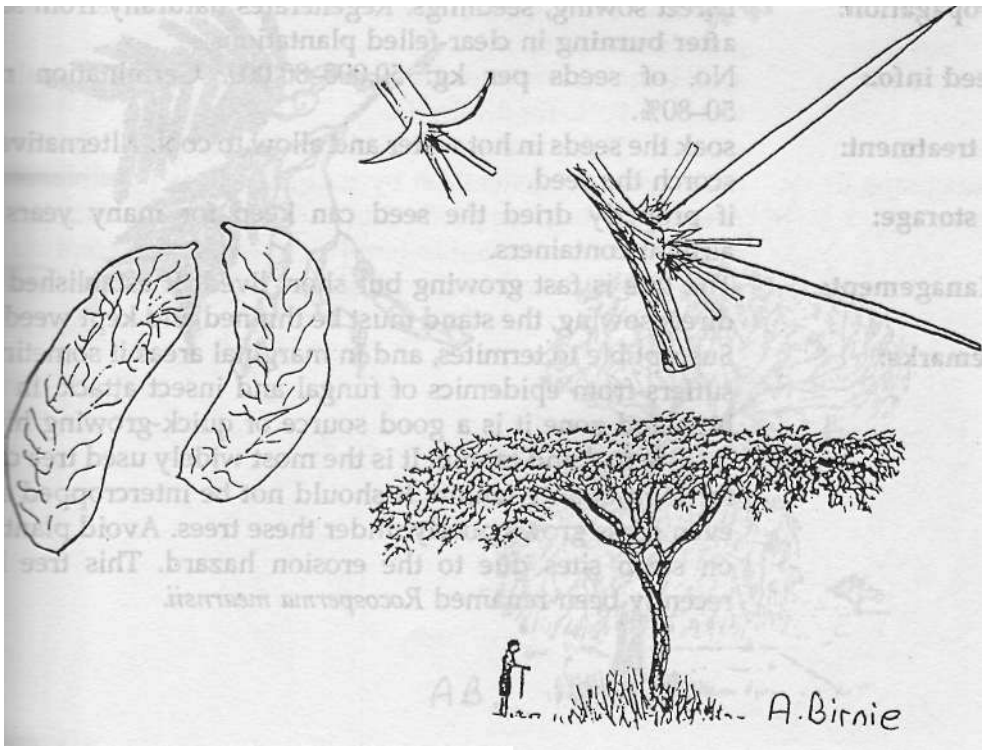
Propagation: Seedlings.

Seed **info.:** No. of seeds per kg: about 4,000. Many seeds are damage< by insects while still in pods. These can be separated frori good seeds through immersion in water: bad seeds float.

treatment: not necessary, but soaking in cold water for 12 hour enhances germination.

storage: seed can be stored for long periods if kept cool, dry an insect free.

Management: Slow growing; lopping.

Remarks: The tree is not well suited for combination with crops du to its broad canopy and heavy shade. Bark crushed in wate can be sprinkled on hot pots to colour them red.

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