

Acacia tortilis

Mimosoideae

Indigenous

Af: *Eebi*

Ar: *Samra*

Bl: *Cheaereba*

Hd: *Tewei, Senganet*

Km: *Sebeta*

Nr: *Sae*

Sh: *Seaito*

Tg: *Alia, Akba*

Tr: *Towayet, Akba*

Ecology: Common all over Africa. Widespread in Eritrea, from sea level to 1,900 m. Favours alkaline soils and can grow on shallow soils. Produces enormous deep roots penetrating a wide area to collect water. Common in the eastern lowlands (Ghahtelai, Wadi-labka, Marsateclai, Buri Peninsula, Tio), on the Dahlak Islands and in the western lowlands around upper Barka river, Mogolo, Hazemo plains, Ala plains, Molki and Ailagundet.

Uses: **Firewood**, charcoal, timber, **poles, posts, fodder** (shoots, leaves, pods), bee forage, soil conservation, nitrogen fixation, shade (livestock), fences (cut branches), fibre (bark).

Description: A characteristic tree of drylands, 4-21 m, the **crown layered, flat and spreading** or rounded; sometimes a shrub. **BARK:** Grey-brown-black and fissured when mature. **THORNS:** Two kinds: **small hooked** and **long, straight white**, sometimes mixed pairs all on one stem. **LEAVES:** 2-10 pairs pinnae on a **short stalk** only 2-4 cm. **FLOWERS:** Fragrant, **cream**, in round heads. **FRUIT:** Yellow-brown pods, each containing up to 10 brown seeds, hang in dense bunches spirally twisted, sometimes in rings.

Propagation: Seedlings, wildings.

Seed: Slow germination, low germination rate (45%), but if well treated may be up to 80%. No. of seed per kg: 12,000-31,000.

treatment: Seed is very hard. Pour boiling water over seed and leave to soak for 24 hours.

storage: Can be stored for a very long period in air-tight containers.

Management: Slow growing but if well weeded and protected it grows relatively fast on dry sandy soils. Protect young plants from goats. Lopping, pollarding.

Remarks: Often indicates the tree limit into arid areas. It can be left to grow on pasture or crop land. The pods are an important source of fodder in the eastern and western lowlands of Eritrea. *A. tortilis* subsp. *spirocarpa* and subsp. *tortilis* have so far been identified in Eritrea. Subsp. *spirocarpa* is found scattered all over the country, while subsp. *tortilis* is restricted to the eastern and western lowlands at altitudes less than 700 m.

