

Indigenous

Ar: *Masaka*

Bl: *Basune*

Eng: *Worm-cure albizia*

Tg: *Bessenna, Messenna*

Tr: *Basunait*

Ecology: A tree widely distributed in Africa from the Sudan and Ethiopia southwards to Natal and Namibia. The bark has been used in many parts of its range to expel worms—the meaning of the specific name. It grows in dry bushland, scrub and woodlands, often along seasonal rivers, even on lava; locally common. In Eritrea, it is common in the western escarpment, e.g. around Habero and Elabered, 1,000-1,700 m.

Uses: **Firewood**, timber (furniture and construction), vermifuge (bark), **fodder**, bee forage, nitrogen fixation, tannin.

Description: A **deciduous** shrub or, more usually, a small tree about 4 m, but can reach 10 m. **BARK:** Smooth, pale grey, later red-brown, rough. Branchlets often sharp tipped. **LEAVES:** Compound, **2-4 pairs of pinnae, the leaf stalk ending in a characteristic stiff, hooked point;** 1-4 pairs leaflets, **1-4 cm long and almost as wide**, the tip wider and usually blunt; clear **net veins**, shiny above, dull and pale below. **FLOWERS:** **Half spherical fluffy heads about 2.5 cm across** appear on leafless twigs, white stamens reach beyond the pale green calyx and corolla, 1-2 cm. **FRUIT:** Bright green when young, turning into **pale yellow, shiny, papery pods 8-16 cm long**, narrowed both ends, containing 3-5 flat round seeds.

Propagation: Seedlings.

Seed: 10,000-20,000 seeds per kg.

treatment: Fresh seeds does not need pretreatment. Stored seeds: Immerse in hot water, allow to cool and soak for 24 hours.

storage: Can be stored for about a year in air-tight containers at room temperature.

Management: Pollarding, coppicing when young.

Remarks: The powdered bark is effective against worms, especially tapeworms. The hard red-brown wood is a useful timber.

