

# Avicennia marina

Verbenaceae

Indigenous

Af: *Takaito Sh:*  
*Tekai*

Ar: *Shorn Eng: Mangrove Tr: Ghondel*

**Ecology:** A tree of the mangrove complex, often dominant, found on the landward side of mud and sand. Also a pioneer in swamps. Silt and mud accumulate around its air roots so changing conditions for later plant arrivals. It is found throughout most of the muddy shores of the Red Sea, including Eritrea around the Dahlak Kebir and other islands. Seedling often root along the high-water mark.

**Uses:** **Firewood, timber** (construction), fence posts, medicine (gum), fodder (leaves for camels), **fish feed and breeding habitat, coastal erosion control**, windbreak, dry fencing (branches).

**Description:** An evergreen shrub or tree, usually 3-5 m, with thick branches and dense foliage to a **rounded crown**. From the extensive horizontal underground root system, a forest of **special breathing roots grows upwards emerging like fingers from the mud, 20-50 cm high**. **BARK: Smooth or powdery, yellow-green**. A resin exudes when cut. Young branches angular with short white hairs. **LEAVES: Opposite, long-oval, 4-11 cm, thick and stiff**, the tip usually pointed, narrowed to a **short stalk, grey-white below, but dark olive-green above**. **FLOWERS: Very small and fragrant, white-cream-orange** (turning black), rather fleshy, in **dense rounded heads** on branched stalks to 3 cm, square in section. They have a **pungent scent** and are visited by ants. **FRUIT: A grey oval capsule**, flat and pointed, somewhat hairy, 1.2 cm across, splitting into 2 parts to release seeds. **The seeds germinate on the tree** before the fruit falls.

**Propagation:** Root suckers, layering, seedlings.

**Seed:**  
**treatment:** No treatment recommended.  
**storage:**

**Management:** Natural regeneration is very profuse.

**Remarks:** Leaves falling into the sea serve as fish feed. The wood is fairly dense and even-grained and suitable for poles, canoes, etc. The bitter aromatic resin from the bark has medicinal uses. The gum is used as a treatment for snake bite and is also said to help delivery of the placenta after childbirth.

*Avicennia marina*

*Verbenaceae*

