

Indigenous

*Eng: Winged bersama*

*Tg: Bersema*

**Ecology:** A small tree found from northern to southern Africa. In Eritrea, it is a forest pioneer which can tolerate marginal conditions and is found in forest, at forest edges or on cleared land as well as in grassland, open woodlands, on slopes and hills of the central and northern highlands and the eastern escarpment. It is particularly common around Mt. Bizen, Sabur, Rora-habab, Demas, Mogo, Halai and Adi-keih, 1,600-2,400 m.

**Uses:** **Firewood**, live fence.

**Description:** A shrub or small leafy tree usually 3-7 m but to 15 m in forest. The trunk may be crooked. **BARK:** Brown and smooth becoming grey and rough. **LEAVES:** Compound with **5-10 pairs of dark green leaflets, plus one** at the tip. The leaf stalk may reach 60 cm and be **slightly winged** while **hairy at the base**. The wing is most conspicuous in young leaves. Each leaflet is about 10 cm long, narrowed to a pointed tip; the edge may be slightly toothed or not. **FLOWERS:** Grow from **thick upright spikes**, like "candles" to 35 cm; buds and stalk **hairy**, opening to **green-cream flowers**, slightly pink, each 2 cm across. **FRUIT:** Thick **woody capsules, rounded to 2.5 cm** across with golden hairs at first. Capsules crack open into 3-5 sections each with a **bright orange-red seed, 1 cm**, wrapped for **half its length** in a **waxy yellow aril**.

**Propagation:** Seedlings, cuttings, root suckers.

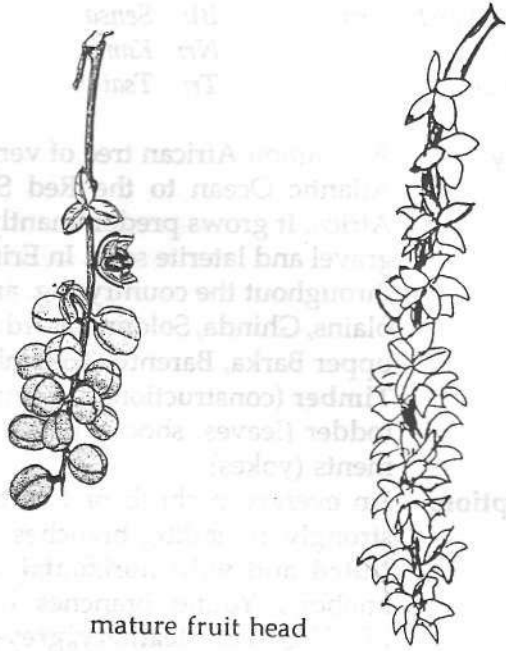
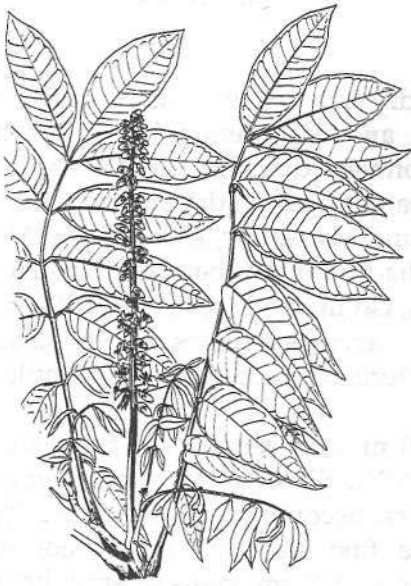
**Seed:** No. of seed per kg: 1,100-1,300. Germination may reach 70% but is sporadic within 5-10 weeks.

**treatment:** The seed coat is thin, but it has to be removed from the aril. Sensitive to freezing.

**storage:** Can retain viability for two months at room temperature.

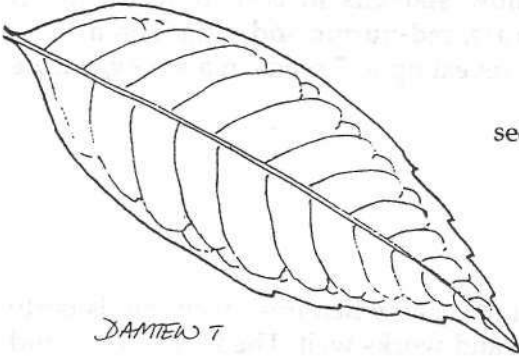
**Management:** Fast growing. Coppicing, lopping, pollarding.

**Remarks:** This species easily regenerates under mature trees and it may invade cultivated land if it is left fallow even for a few years. Only the subspecies *abyssinica* is recognized in Eritrea.



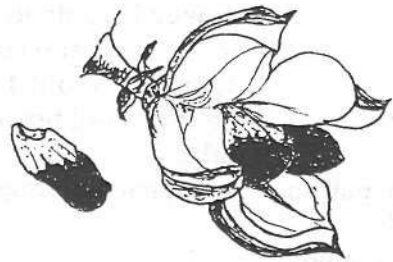
mature fruit head

A.B

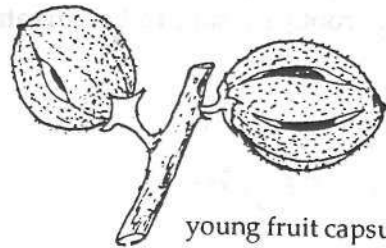


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seed



open woody capsules



young fruit capsules