

Commiphora africana

Burseraceae



Indigenous

Ag: *Qwa*
Am: *Anqa*
Eng: *Commiphora*
Ga: *Dogama, Zunsie*
Or: *Hamessa*
Sm: *Kobbok*
Tg: *Anqwa*

Ecology

Widely distributed in the drier parts of Africa from Senegal, east to Somalia and south to South Africa. In Ethiopia, it grows in *Acacia*, *Acacia-Commiphora*, *Combretum-Terminalia*, and *Commiphora-Boswellia* woodland, wooded grassland and bushland, often on rocky slopes, in clay or sand in dry areas. This tree is typical of much thorny bush, open savanna and desert of Dry and Moist Kolla agroclimatic zones in Tigray, Gonder, Welo, Wolega, Kefa, Shoa, Gamo Gofa, Sidamo, Bale and Harerge regions, 500–1,900 m.

Uses

Firewood, utensils, food (fruit), drink (bark tea), fodder (for camels, goats), medicine (roots, bark, fruit, resin), live fence, gum-resin.

Description

Often a spiny shrub but may become a tree to 6–10 m, the trunk a straight cylinder bearing many horizontal spiny branches. Most shoots are spine-tipped. **BARK:** Grey-green, the thin shiny surface peeling off, showing green below. Old bark squared and grooved. When cut a yellow resin drips out and hardens. Youngest shoots

hairy. Deciduous, bare for many months.

LEAVES: Soft, bright green and hairy, compound with 3 leaflets, central one much longer than the other two (can be 10 times larger), edge wavy, round-toothed, fragrant when crushed. **FLOWERS:** Small, red, tubular, in tight clusters, often on thorns on the bare tree. **FRUIT:** Pink-red, soft, about 1 cm, pointed, a stony seed inside.

Propagation

Large cuttings.

Seed

Only propagated by cuttings.

Storage:

Treatment:

Management

Slow growing. Lopping.

Remarks

Two varieties are recognized in Ethiopia. Leaves contain bitter tannin and are, therefore, cattle do not browse them, but they are important fodder for camels and goats. It comes into leaf just before the rains.

