

Erythrina abyssinica

Papilionoideae

Indigenous

Ar: *Dus*

Bl: *Kuara*

Eng: *Flame tree, Lucky-bean tree*

Tg: *Zuwawue*

Tr: *Felei*

Ecology: A small thorny tree found all over Africa in warm temperate and tropical areas as well as in Central America, Australia, southern Asia and Hawaii. In Eritrea, it grows in woodland, at forest edges and on hillsides of the central highlands and in the upper parts of the eastern and western escarpments, e.g. around Enda-abune-butseamlak (near Mai-edaga), Habela, Habrenkeka, Roramensa, Melebso and on Mt. Mrara, 1,300-2,500 m.

Uses: Firewood, **carving** (utensils, mortars, drums, bee-hives), medicine (bark, roots), **bee forage**, mulch, soil conservation, nitrogen fixation, ornamental, **live fence**, necklaces (seeds), curios (seeds), ceremonial, veterinary medicine (leaves).

Description: A deciduous tree with a short trunk and thick spreading branches and a rounded crown, 6-12 m. **BARK:** Deeply grooved, brown, thick and corky, with or without woody spines. **LEAVES:** Compound with 3 leaflets, **largest leaflet rounded to 15 cm**; branchlets and under leaves covered with **grey-brown hairs, veins and stalks sometimes prickly**. **FLOWERS:** **Orange-red heads**, often appearing on the bare tree. Both narrow calyx lobes and petals are coloured, each flower to 5 cm long. **FRUIT:** Woody pods, 4-16 cm long, hairy, strongly narrowed between seeds, opening to set free 1-10 **shiny red seeds** with a grey-black patch.

Propagation: Seedlings, cuttings, direct sowing.

Seed: Low germination rate. No. of seeds per kg: $\pm 6,800$.

treatment: Not necessary.

storage: Seed stores for long periods if kept cool, dry and insect free.

Management: Pollarding, coppicing. Slow growing. Propagation from cuttings is successful if done immediately after the rainy season.

Remarks: The tree is resistant to fire and termites as the young trees establish a deep root system before stem growth. The soft white wood is a poor timber but can be carved fairly easily. The tree is used on stream banks and for soil-conservation terraces. The seeds contain a poison but it is only released if they are crushed. Leaves have been used to treat skin diseases in cattle.

