PLANT FACT SHEET

Vachellia drepanolobium (Harms ex Y. Sjostedt) P.J.H. Hurter

GENUS *Vachellia* **FAMILY** Fabaceae

COMMON NAMES Whistling thorn, Ant-galled acacia

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Young pods, Fruit, Vegetable, Galls, Bark

The young green pods are eaten as a vegetable.
The young galls are edible. The galls are soft and fleshy when fresh. They are dark green and bitter when young and turn reddish purple later and are then best eaten.
The inner bark is chewed for its sweet/bitter taste.

DESCRIPTION

A shrub or small tree. It grows 6 m high. The crown can be flat or spreading. The bark is dark grey. It is rough and has fine cracks. There are long narrow spines. These are in pairs and are 7 cm long. The bases are swollen to form galls. The leaves are compound and twice divided. There are 3-13 pairs of larger leaflets and 11-22 pairs of small leaflets. These are 6 mm long by 2 mm wide. The flowers are white or cream and in heads. The fruit are dark brown pods. They can be sword shaped or spiral shaped and 6 cm long by 1 cm wide. They split open while on the tree.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It grows in woody grassland. It grows well on black cotton and clay soils. In East Africa it grows between 700-2,500 m altitude. It is usually on dry rocky hillsides. It is in areas with rainfall of 500-1,300 mm per year. It can grow in arid places.

NOTES

There are about 1,350 Acacia species. Over 1,000 occur in Australia. Also as Mimosaceae.

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