PLANT FACT SHEET

Vachellia reficiens (Wawra) Kyal. & Boatwr.

GENUS *Vachellia* **FAMILY** Fabaceae

COMMON NAMES False umbrella thorn

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Gum, Seeds, Bark

The bark curdles milk.
The gum is eaten as a snack.
The inner bark is sweet and is chewed.

DESCRIPTION

A bush or small tree. It can be 5 m high. It has spines which can be hooked or straight. They are in pairs in the axils of the leaves. They are 2-6 mm long. The bark is red brown and rough and becomes cracked when old. The leaves are compound. There are 2-9 pairs of stalks each bearing 5-11 pairs of very small leaflets. The flowers are white balls on slender stalks. They are 2-3 cm long. The fruit are short pods. They are red and 5-8 cm long by 0.6-1 cm wide. They are thinly woody and flat. There are 2 subspecies recognised.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It grows on sandy soils and occasionally brackish soils. It can be on mountain slopes, dry riverbeds of stony flats. In East Africa it grows between 50-1,450 m altitude. It grows in areas with an annual rainfall between 15-400 mm. It can tolerate drought. 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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