PLANT FACT SHEET

Senegalia mellifera (Vahl) Seigler & Ebinger

GENUS *Senegalia* **FAMILY** Fabaceae

COMMON NAMES Blackthorn

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Pod, Fruit, Gum, Leaves, flower - nectar, Root - flavouring, Seed

The roots are used for flavouring and to curdle milk.
The gum is eaten as a snack.
The seed are ground into a flour and then mixed with other cereals.

DESCRIPTION

A shrub or tree. It grows 5 m tall. The small branches are flexible. There are prickles in pairs. They are up to 7 mm long and curved. The leaves have 2-3 pairs of pinnae with 1-2 pairs of leaflets. The flower spike is 2-3 cm long. The flowers are creamy white to yellow. They have a scent. The fruit is a pod up to 8 cm long and 2-3 cm wide. The pods are flattened.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. In east Africa it grows up to 1,500 m above sea level. It grows on loamy soils. It grows in areas with annual rainfalls between 40-800 mm. It can grow in arid places. It is drought tolerant. It grows in the Sahel.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seeds. The seeds can be sown direct or put in a nursery. Seeds germinate in 2-14 days. The seeds should be soaked in cold water for 12 hours or scratched to break the hard seed coat. Plants can be cut back and will re-grow.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Plants are slow growing.

NOTES

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

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