PLANT FACT SHEET

Vachellia karroo (Hayne) Banfi & Gallaso

GENUS *Vachellia* **FAMILY** Fabaceae

COMMON NAMES Karroo Thorn, Cape gum

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds - coffee, Gum, Bark, Roots, Seeds, Leaves - coffee

The tree oozes a clear red-gold gum which is chewed. It is sweet and eaten by children.
The seeds are roasted and ground then used as a substitute for coffee.
The inner bark is chewed.

DESCRIPTION

An evergreen shrub or small tree. It grows to 5 m tall and 3 m wide. It can be 15 m tall. The stem is erect. It has spines. The spines are silvery white with a black tip. The spines or thorns can be 7 cm long. The bark is rough and grey-black. The bark peals off to show a rust red colour underneath. The branches are spreading. The leaves (phyllodes) are grey and divided twice. They are 10 cm long. There are 8-20 pairs of leaflets. The flowers are pale yellow. They have a sweet smell. They flowers occur in dense clusters. The pods are 12.5 cm long and narrow. The pods curve to a sickle shape. When ripe they are dark brown.

HABITAT

This is a native of Southern Africa. It prefers light to medium soils They need to be well drained. It requires a sunny protected position. It can resist drought and frost. It grows in areas with an annual rainfall between 50-1,500 mm. It grows between 3-2,400 m above sea level. It grows in coastal scrub and woodland and along streams. It can grow in arid places. It suits hardiness zones 9-11.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It is grown from seed. The seed needs to be treated to break the hard seed coat. Normally this is by putting the seeds in very hot water and letting the water cool down overnight then planting the seeds immediately. Seeds grow quickly. Seeds germinate in 3-12 days and can be transplanted when young.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Plants are fast growing.

NOTES

There are about 1,350 Acacia species. Over 1,000 occur in Australia. It can become a weed. Also as Mimosaceae.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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