PLANT FACT SHEET

Vachellia sieberiana (DC.) Kyal. & Boatwr.

GENUS *Vachellia* **FAMILY** Fabaceae

COMMON NAMES Paperbark acacia, Flat-topped thorn

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Gum, Vegetable

The gum is eaten raw.

DESCRIPTION

A tree. It grows up to 18 m tall. The crown is spreading and often has a flat top. The bark at the base is usually rough. It is light coloured and corky. It flakes off. The thorns are straight and up to 9 cm long. The leaves are twice divided. There are 6-23 pairs of leaflets along a stalk. The leaflets are very small. The flowers are creamy white and in round heads. These are about 1 cm across. The fruit are large woody pods. These are 21 cm long by 3 cm wide. They are thick and slightly curved. There are 12 hard flat seeds inside. These are 1 cm long. Three varieties have been recognised.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It occurs in semi arid areas. It grows in the Sahel. In Uganda is grows between 600-2,800 m altitude. It is sensitive to frost when young. It is fairly drought tolerant. It grows in areas with an annual rainfall above 300 mm. It can grow in arid places.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It is grown from seed. The seed should be put in hot water then allowed to cool and soak for 24 hours before sowing. The seed can be stored if kept cool, dry and insect free. The tree can be pruned or cut back and allowed to re-grow. Seeds can be stored if cool and dry.

Harvesting and Seed Production

The tree is slow growing.

NOTES

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

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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