PLANT FACT SHEET

# *Vachellia abyssinica* (Hochst. ex Benth.) Kyal. & Boatwr.

**GENUS** *Vachellia* **FAMILY** Fabaceae

**COMMON NAMES** Flat-top acacia

## EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

**Edible parts:** Gum, Resin

The gum is chewed raw. The bark is chewed and the juice is swallowed.

## DESCRIPTION

A large flat topped tree. It grows 6-20 m high. The bark is dark brown and rough. The thorns are in pairs and are white. The thorns are usually less than 3 cm long. Sometimes there are no thorns. The leaves are feathery and twice divided into leaflets along the stalk. There are 15-40 pairs of larger leaflets and 20-30 pairs of smaller leaflets. The flowers are in round heads and are white. The fruit are brown pods. They are straight or only slightly curved. They are 1.2 cm wide by 2.1 cm long. They split open and allow the seeds to fall out.

## HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It grows at the edge of highland forest in East Africa. It grows between 1,200-2,300 m altitude. It in best in areas with a temperature between 20-30°C and an annual rainfall between 450-1,200 mm.

## PRODUCTION

### Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seeds or root suckers. Seeds can be put in a nursery and transplanted or sown where they are to grow. Damaged seeds can be separated from good seed by floating them off. Seeds can be stored in a cool dry place. Before planting seeds should be soaked in cold or hot water that is then allowed to cool. Young plants can be cut back and allowed to re-grow.

### Harvesting and Seed Production

Plants grow at a medium rate.

## NOTES

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

## PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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