PLANT FACT SHEET

Vachellia tortilis subsp. heteracantha (Burch.) Kyal. & Boatwr.

GENUS *Vachellia* **FAMILY** Fabaceae

COMMON NAMES Umbrella thorn

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Gum, Bark, Leaves, Fruit

The gum is eaten.
The fruit pods have the seeds removed and the pulp is boiled with milk, blood or water to make an edible porridge. Corn can be added.
The pods are eaten as a snack.

DESCRIPTION

A shrub or tree. It grows 1-20 m tall. It is small and thorny and has a flat top. The thorns are straight and stout. They are white and can be 7 cm long. These can be replaced by short sharp hooks. It loses its leaves during the year. The leaves are 3 cm long with up to 10 pairs of pinnae and 20 pairs of leaflets. These are 2 mm long by 0.5 mm wide. The flowers are in small groups. They are round and 8 mm across. The flowers are white. The fruit are much twisted. They are 8 cm long, but twisted.

HABITAT

It is a tropical and subtropical plant. It is tolerant of drought. It is resistant to frost. It grows in areas with an annual rainfall above 150 mm. It grow between 30-1,600 m above sea level. It can grow on alkaline soils. It can grow in arid places.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seeds. The seeds are removed from the pod and have boiling water poured over them then allowed to soak overnight. They are then planted in fertile soil.

Harvesting and Seed Production

It grows at a medium rate.

NOTES

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

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French, B.R. & Maynard, A.R. Food Plants International Database. Food Plants International

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