PLANT FACT SHEET

Vachellia seyal (Delile) P. J. H. Hurter

GENUS *Vachellia* **FAMILY** Fabaceae

COMMON NAMES Shittim wood, Whistling thorn

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Gum, Bark - tea

The bark yields an edible gum. It is mixed with the pulp of Balanites aegyptiaca to form a syrup.
The inner bark is chewed for its sweet taste. The gum is eaten raw. It is chewed and the juice swallowed.

DESCRIPTION

A small tree. It grows 3-12 m altitude. The bark is a distinctive powdery white to pale green or orange. It has thorns which occur in pairs. They are white and can be 8 cm long. The leaves are twice divided and there are 3-7 pairs of leaflets. The flowers occur in large numbers. They are yellow and in large round heads. These are about 1 cm across. The fruit are narrow curved pods. These are shiny and light brown. They are slightly constricted between the seeds. They are 7-20 cm long.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It grows in the lowlands and the highlands. It grows in the semi arid zones. It grows in the Sahel. It grows from 600-1,200 m altitude in Uganda. It grows between 20-2,200 m above sea level. It grows in hot arid areas. It grows in areas with an annual rainfall between 100-2,280 mm. It can grow in alkaline soils and possibly tolerate some salt. It can grow in arid places.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. If fresh seed are used they can just be sown. Dry seed needs to soaked in cold water for 24 hours. Seed can be stored for several years if kept cool, dry and free from insects. It can be used as a hedge.

Harvesting and Seed Production

It grows at a medium pace.

NOTES

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

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