

Acacia senegal

Fabaceae (Mimosaceae)

Indigenous

COMMON NAMES: **Bajun:** Mtengewwa; **Boran:** Baabido (gum), Burra diima, Iddaado, Sadeema, Sapans; **Daasanach:** Dang'ite; **Digo:** Chikwata, Kikwata; **English:** Gum arabic tree, Gum arabic acacia; **Gabra:** Idaado; **Ilchamus:** Lderkesi; **Kamba:** Kikole, King'olola, King'ola (Mwingi), King'ole (Machakos); **Luhya (Bukusu):** Kumung'ang'a; **Luo:** Kiluor, Otiep; **Maasai:** Enderkesi, Interkes (plural), Olterkesi; **Mbeere:** Mung'ora; **Orma:** Bura diima; **Pokot:** Chemanga, Chemangayan; **Rendille:** Hadhaadh, Mirgi; **Samburu:** Lderkesi, Manok (gum); **Somali:** Adad, Edad; **Swahili:** Kikwata, Mgunga; **Teso:** Ekodokodoi, Ekunoit; **Tharaka:** Mung'oor; **Turkana:** Ekunoit; **Wardei:** Cadaad.

DESCRIPTION: Shrub or small tree up to 9 m, more often 2–4 m, usually with many low branches. Flat-topped crown in mature trees. **BARK:** Waxy, smooth, then **peeling and papery from red-brown base**. **THORNS:** Usually in 3s, the central one hooked downwards, the 2 laterals curved up, brown to black. **FLOWERS:** Buds red, opening to long white or cream spikes, borne in 2s or 3s or sometimes singly, 8 cm long, fragrant, usually develop before the rainy season. **FRUIT:** Variable pods, flat, oblong to 10 cm, **tapering both ends**, often constricted between seeds, soft grey-yellow becoming **papery brown, veins prominent, splitting** to release usually 3–5 greenish brown, flattened seed with a circular outline.

ECOLOGY: A common acacia in dry parts of Africa and Asia. Found from West Africa and North Africa south to South Africa. Widespread in most arid and semi-arid zones of Kenya in dry *Acacia-Commiphora* bushland, also wooded grassland often found at edges of luggas (dry riverbeds). Very common in the dry northern districts. Often a dominant species on raised rocky ground in very dry areas, 0–1,900 m. Prefers well-aerated soils, especially rocky, loam or sandy soils. Rainfall: 200–800 mm. Agroclimatic Zones III–VII. Flowers in July (Kitui); fruits in August–September (Turkana, Baringo, Ngong); flowers in March–May and seeds in October–November in Bungoma.

USES: Firewood, charcoal, poles, posts, tools, handles, edible gum, medicine (roots), fodder (pods and leaves for camels and goats), bee forage, soil conservation, sand stabilization, fibre, commercial 'gum arabic' (food stabilizer, glue, pharmaceutical uses), veterinary medicine.

PROPAGATION: Direct sowing at site.

