

MONKEY THORN

Senegalia galpinii

Fabaceae

ECHO® PLANT INFORMATION SHEET

Description

Monkey thorn is a tall (20 to 30 m), long-lived deciduous tree of Eastern and Southern Africa. Trunks grow to 2 m wide, supporting a wide (10 m), rounded canopy. Young trees have a light-colored (whitish yellow) bark that darkens over time. Branches have pairs of hooked thorns, creamy white flowers, and long reddish purple pods. The leaves allow some sunlight to reach the ground. Leaves are shed during the cool dry season.

Origin

South and East Africa

Uses

Monkey thorn is a valuable timber tree used for construction and fencing. Its flowers attract bees for honey production, and the pods are eaten by livestock and wildlife. It is a soil nitrogen fixing species. It is also sometimes planted as an ornamental tree.

Cultivation

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- **Elevation** – 350-1500 m
- **Rainfall** – 450-2000 mm/year
- **Soil Types** – Loam or clay soils
- **Temperature Range** – mean of 27 C (where established trees were found in Madagascar); somewhat frost tolerant
- **Day Length Sensitivity** – Not a significant factor
- **Light** – Prefers full sun

Monkey thorn is drought resistant and grows quickly, often reaching a height of 3 m after three years. It is a pioneer species well suited to afforestation. It is easily propagated from seeds, which germinate best if soaked overnight in hot water before planting.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Young trees can be coppiced. Trunks and branches of mature trees can be sawn into planks. Harvest pods when dry on the tree.

Pests and Diseases

The wood is described as fairly resistant to termites; however, the sapwood is attacked by *Lyctus* borers and blue stain fungi.

Cooking and Nutrition

It is not considered edible.

References

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Lemmens, R.H.M.J., 2006. *Acacia galpinii* Burt Davy. [Internet] Record from PROTA4U. Louppe, D., Oteng-Amoako, A.A. & Brink, M. (Editors). PROTA (Plant Resources of Tropical Africa / Ressources végétales de l'Afrique tropicale), Wageningen, Netherlands.

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