

Erythrina senegalensis

DC.

Fabaceae

This species is closely related to and probably often confused with *Erythrina vogelii* Hook.f., a coastal tree found from Cote D'Ivoire to Cameroon. The two species may even hybridize[299].

+ Synonyms

Common Name:

General Information

Erythrina senegalensis is a spiny shrub or tree with an open crown; it usually grows around 3 - 4.5 metres tall, but sometimes reaches up to 12 - 15 metres. The bole has a thick, corky, dark grey bark armed with stout prickles slightly recurved from a woody base[328, 484, 774].

The tree is harvested from the wild for its various local medicinal uses. It is often grown as a hedge in Africa. It usually flowers when leafless, producing large, red, conspicuous, ornamental flowers[328, 484].

Known Hazards

The raw seeds are poisonous[774].

Botanical References

Range

West tropical Africa - Senegal to northern Cameroon.

Habitat

Burned savannah; marigot edges; plateaux with fine gravel; degraded regrowths; sandy colluvium; coastal savannah; at elevations from near sea-level to 1,200 metres[328].

Properties

Medicinal Rating	++
Other Uses Rating	✂✂✂
Habit	Tree
Height	4.00 m
Cultivation Status	Ornamental, Wild

Cultivation Details

The plant can be coppiced[484]. It also produces suckers[484].

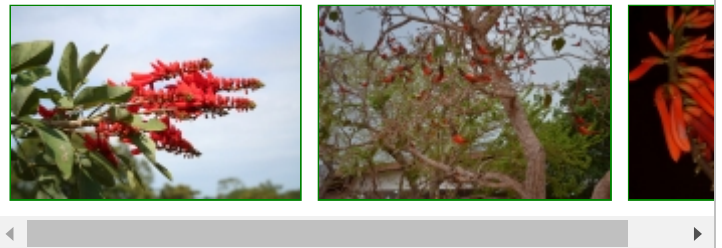
The various species of *Erythrina* can all, as far as is known, be intercrossed to produce fertile hybrids[310].

This species has a symbiotic relationship with certain soil bacteria; these bacteria form nodules on the roots and fix atmospheric nitrogen. Some of this nitrogen is utilized by the growing plant but some can also be used by other plants growing nearby[755].



Flowering stem

Photograph by: [Marco Schmidt](#)
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Edible Uses

None known

Medicinal

The bark is febrifuge. A decoction is taken in the treatment of yellow fever, malaria, bronchitis, rachitis, liver and gallbladder problems, amenorrhoea, sterility in women[608, 774].

The bark and the roots are commonly used in the treatment of gastro-intestinal disorders, as an anti-abortive, for treating leprosy, haemorrhoids and as a general tonic[774].

The juice of the leaves is used in treating wounds[774].

The wood is chewed as an aphrodisiac[774].

The plant (part not specified) is used in the treatment of fractures[608].

Agroforestry Uses:

The plant is commonly grown as a hedge in Africa[328].

Other Uses

The seeds are used as beads[774].

The wood is very light in weight, soft and not durable[484]. It is of little value but is sometimes used for fencing[484].

Propagation

Like many species within the family Fabaceae, once they have been dried for storage the seeds of this species may benefit from scarification before sowing in order to speed up and improve germination. This can usually be done by pouring a small amount of nearly boiling water on the seeds (being careful not to cook them!) and then soaking them for 12 - 24 hours in warm water. By this time they should have imbibed moisture and swollen - if they have not, then carefully make a nick in the seedcoat (being careful not to damage the embryo) and soak for a further 12 hours before sowing[K].

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Captcha: subtract 1 from 12

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