

# Piliostigma reticulatum

(DC.) Hochst.

Fabaceae

Recent research into plants formerly included in Bauhinia (see Wunderlin, R.P. 2010. Reorganization of the Cercideae (Fabaceae: Caesalpinioideae). Phytoneuron 2010-48: 1-5.) has reorganized the species of Bauhinia into 9 genera. Although not universally accepted as yet (2011), we are following this new treatment because it has been taken up by several authorities including GRIN, Flora of North America[270] and African Flowering Plants[328].

## + Synonyms

**Common Name: Camel's Foot**

## General Information

Camel's foot is an evergreen plant that can vary in habit from a shrub 1 - 3 metres tall with divergent branches, to a much branched tree with a very dense, spherical, spreading crown; it can grow up to 10 metres tall[328]. The bole is twisted[375]. The plant is sometimes gathered from the wild and used locally for food, medicine and a range of commodities.

## Known Hazards

None known

## Botanical References

## Range

Sub-Saharan Africa - Mauritania and Senegal, east to Sudan.

## Habitat

Drier savannah regions; plateau with ferruginous hard-pan; dunes; forming bush on fallow land; valleys; flooded or humid areas; sandy-clayey soil; cultivations on sand; very poor soils; deteriorated sandstone; at elevations up to 945 - 1825 metres[328].

## Properties

Edibility Rating	
Medicinal Rating	
Other Uses Rating	
Habit	Evergreen Tree
Height	8.00 m
Self-fertile	No
Cultivation Status	Wild

## Cultivation Details

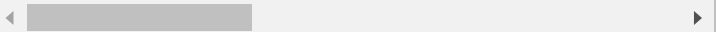
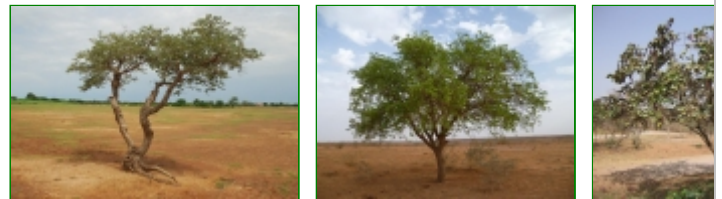
Found in the wild on various kinds of soils from sandy to clay and lateritic[375]. Plants can tolerate periodic inundation of the soil[774].

This species can be confused with *P. Thonningii* when the leaves are old and more or less without hairs[328].



Rather gnarled specimen growing in native habitat  
 Photograph by: [Stefan Porembski: African plants - A Photo Guide](#)

© Stefan Porembski



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[200].

A dioecious species, both male and female forms need to be grown if seed is required.

## Edible Uses

Seeds[46].

The leaves are used for drinks[375, 774]. A slightly acid flavour[774].

The pounded and boiled pods are used for drinks[375].

## Medicinal

A tea made from the leaves is said to be an effective treatment for colds[375, 774].

The bark is astringent[375]. It is used as a treatment for diarrhoea and dysentery[375, 774].

Both the leaves and the bark have haemostatic and antiseptic properties[375, 774]. They are used to treat ulcers, boils, wounds and syphilitic cancer[375]. Other medical uses are against coughs, bronchitis, malaria, hepato-biliary ailments, hydropsy, sterility, rickets and kwashiorkor[375].

## Other Uses

The roots are the source of a mahogany-coloured pigment[46]. A red dye is obtained from the pounded roots[774]. The seeds and pods are a source of a blue and a black dye[46, 375].

A fibre obtained from the bark is used to make clothes and ropes[46, 375].

The ashes of the plant are used in making soap[46].

The bark contains 18 % tannins[375, 774].

The wood is reddish, darkening to brown[375]. It is attacked by various insects including termites[375].

The wood is used for fuel[774].

## Propagation

Seed - it has a hard seedcoat and may benefit from scarification before sowing to speed up germination[375]. 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.

## Add a Comment:

If you have any useful information about this plant, please leave a comment. Comments have to be approved before they are shown here.

Name:

Email(Private):

Message:

**Captcha:** How many fingers does the typical human have?

**Last update on 2017-07-15:** Now containing 11205 plants.



Useful Tropical Plants Database 2014 by [Ken Fern](#), web interface by [Ajna Fern](#) with help from [Richard Morris](#).

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