

## Balanites orbicularis (B. rotundifolia)

*Balanitaceae*

Indigenous

**Common names:** Ateso T: Ebei

**Ecology:** A thorny bush of arid areas where it may be very common. It is evergreen, drought resistant and grows on a variety of soils, often found in sandy dry river beds. In Uganda it grows in very dry savannah, e. g. in North Eastern Region.

**Uses:** Firewood, charcoal, poles, tool handles, food (fruit and seed), fodder (leaves, young shoots), shade, soil conservation, fencing, perfume.

**Description:** A spiny multi-stemmed evergreen shrub or tree 2-5 m. **BARK:** grey, later rough and furrowed. **THORNS:** **unusually dark green, stout, to 3 cm and straight.** **LEAVES:** small, in pairs with no stalks, round to heart-shaped, grey-green hairy. **FLOWERS:** small green-yellow in small bunches along the thorns. **FRUIT:** oval, hairy to 2 cm (fruit and seed more rounded and smaller than *B. aegyptiaca*).

**Propagation:** Seedlings (sow seed in pots).

**Seed:**

**treatment:** not necessary.

**storage:** seed, removed from fruit, can be stored for up to one year.

**Management:** Slow-growing, coppicing.

**Remarks:** Very ripe fruit is edible raw, but unripe fruit and seeds need boiling for many hours. The leaves and shoots provide fodder for animals in very arid areas.

Balanites orbicularis (B. rotundifolia)

Balanitaceae

Common names: English: Orchid tree, mountain ebony.  
Ecology: A tree throughout the tropics. Commonly planted in gardens and avenues in most towns throughout Uganda.

Uses: Firewood, a oil, food (fruit, pickles), fodder, shade cover.

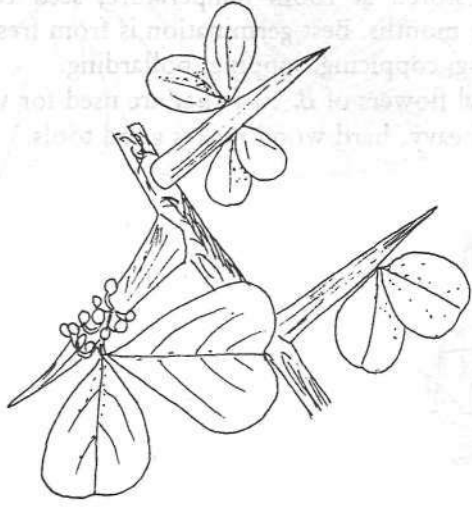
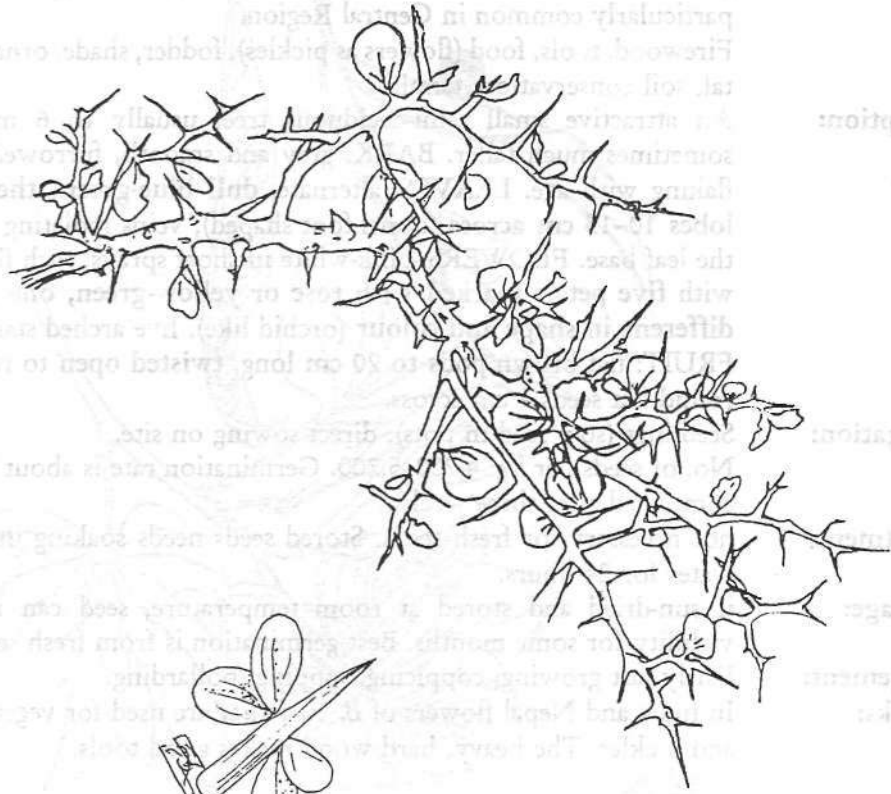
Description: A tree with a thick, gnarled trunk and a dense canopy of large, rounded leaves. The tree is characterized by its thorny branches and its ability to produce a large amount of shade.

Propagation: Seeds. The seeds are dispersed by birds and other animals. The tree is also propagated by cuttings and layering.

Storage: The seeds can be stored for several years. The oil can be stored for several months.

Management: The tree is a good shade tree and is also a good source of fuelwood. It is also a good source of food for livestock.

Remarks: The tree is a member of the Balanitaceae family. It is closely related to the tree Balanites aegyptiaca.



mature fruit

