

Maytenus senegalensis

Celastraceae

Indigenous

Bl: Argudi

Hd: Debeleab

Km: Aikota

Nr: Mendebkal

Sh: Azaz

Tg: Arghudi

Tr: Hirgitte

Ecology: A tropical African shrub or tree from north Africa, Somalia to Senegal, south to South Africa, in Madagascar and east to Bangladesh with a wide altitude range from sea level to 2,400 m. In Eritrea, the shrub is common in open woodlands and bushlands in the central and northern highlands and eastern escarpments, e.g. around Awli-tseru, Tselema, Solomuna, Mensa and Wogret, 550-2,100 m.

Uses: **Firewood**, charcoal, medicine (roots, leaves, bark), fodder (leaves), bee forage, **live fence**, **dry fence** (spiny branches), roofing materials for local houses, afrocombs.

Description: Usually a shrub, but can be a tree to 8 m high, the trunk straight with drooping branches and many sucker shoots, either with or without spines. **BARK:** Trunk grey, rough and thick, vertical grooves; spines to 1-5 cm, on smooth red or grey-green branches which have no hairs or dots. **LEAVES:** Alternate or in clusters, smooth, often fleshy, variable in shape, oval, the **tip often wider than the base**, 3-12 cm long, the edge **finely round toothed**, the short **stalk and midrib often pink**. **FLOWERS:** **White-cream-green** in dense stalked clusters about 4 cm across, sweet scented, often covering the tree. **FRUIT:** A 2- or 3-part capsule, green then **red, round, to 6 mm, 1-2 shiny red-brown seeds**, more than half covered by a soft **white aril**.

Propagation: Seedlings.

Seed: Prolific seeder; seeds usually dispersed by birds.

treatment: Not necessary.

storage: Mature and dry seed can be stored if kept cold in air-tight containers.

Management: Lopping, trimming tops and sides to produce a good live fence.

Remarks: This is a common shrub which has many uses as a local medicine. The wood is yellow-white, hard and durable.

