

Selim Acacia, *as salam*

A common, large and spiny, desert shrub or small tree, on the Arabian Peninsula, *A. ehrenbergiana* is known in Arabic as *salam*, and grows in groups in depressions and wadis, where rainwater runoff and fine waterborne sediment collect. The tree usually has multiple branches from the ground, with a greenish-brown, peeling bark, similar to that of *Acacia seyal*, with which it can be confused. In comparison, the whitish thorns of *A. ehrenbergiana* are longer than the leaves. Flowers are borne in yellow heads; seed pods are long, up to 10 cm. The tree has many uses in the desert: it is browsed by camels, pollarded for stock, produces an edible gum, is used for firewood and fodder; fibre ropes are made from the bark, and a liquid medicine known as *Qataran* is extracted for use in treating animal and human skin parasites. The heavy fluid is also used to protect the trunks of fruit trees from insects and fungi. *A. ehrenbergiana* regrows well from cut stumps, and can be propagated by seed mixed with animal manure, which helps acacia seeds to germinate better. The tree is famously used in beekeeping, producing good-quality *salam* honey. The trees usually grow randomly about 5 metres apart. One of the most drought-tolerant of acacias, it can gradually be weaned off watering altogether, after initial irrigation during the first year after planting. High growth rates occur during a heavy rain season. Owing to its drought tolerance, the tree can be planted in extensive landscape schemes, where a natural desert setting is the objective.



GENERAL

Origin	: sub-tropical, tropical
Vigour	: normal growth rate
Humidity	: extremely arid, very arid
Propagation	: sowing and pricking out
Maintenance	: low

CONDITIONS

Urban climate	: resistant
Dessication	: resistant
Stagnant water	: vulnerable
Irrigation	: low
Salinity/ppm	: moderate (2500 ppm)
Hardiness	: -6°C

SHAPE

Type	: tree, shrub
Height	: 7 m
Spread	: 12 m
Foliage	: semi-evergreen

FLOWER

Colour	: yellow
Size	: 1.5 cm
Period	: February - April
Smell	: pleasantly scented, flower

FRUIT

Type of fruit	: pod
Fruit size	: 10 cm