

Woman's Tongue, *labakh*, *daqn al basha*

When in good leaf, this is one of Arriyadh's most reliable and attractive trees. Its compact growth and wide-spreading crown make it an ideal shade tree. It has bright, green foliage with large leaves that close up at night. From spring to autumn, the clusters of delicate, powder-puff flowers are very fragrant, particularly in the evening, deepening in colour with age. Often still on the tree during flowering and in winter, the flat pods, containing dark, round seeds, are prominent, and remain on the tree when the leaves have dropped, rattling in the wind. Their chattering noise has earned the tree the English common name of 'Woman's Tongue'. Unfortunately, owing to shedding of leaves during the hot summer months, the tree can take on a rather desiccated appearance, although this will be improved with regular irrigation. The root system is wide, but shallow. Fertilisation will maintain the lush green foliage and flowering, adding an accent to an arid landscape. *A. lebbeck* (known in Arabic as *Labakh*) is often planted in agricultural areas for shade, fodder and fuel wood, and produces dark-brown timber. It is an excellent tree for large gardens, parks and urban open spaces, and especially for roadside planting. Selective pruning of no more than 20% of foliage during the dormant season is necessary during the initial years to retain its shape and maintain a balanced branch framework. Plant during the winter: large specimens, especially those bare-rooted, may be slow to get started.



GENERAL

Origin	: sub-tropical, tropical
Vigour	: fast growing
Humidity	: semi-arid, semi-humid
Propagation	: sowing and pricking out
Maintenance	: moderate

CONDITIONS

Urban climate	: resistant
Dessication	: vulnerable
Stagnant water	: vulnerable
Irrigation	: high
Salinity/ppm	: very high (6000 ppm)
Hardiness	: -3°C

SHAPE

Type	: tree
Height	: 12 m-25 m
Spread	: 12 m-18 m
Foliage	: deciduous

FLOWER

Colour	: stamens: pale yellow
Size	: 2 cm
Period	: May - September
Smell	: scented, strong, gives freely of its scent, flower

FRUIT

Type of fruit	: pod
Fruit size	: 20 cm - 30 cm
Toxicity	: inedible