

*Capparis spinosa*, Capparaceaea

Caper, lasaf, shafлах

*Capparis spinosa* has the common Arabic names shafлах, lasaf and malat. The shrub grows slowly to a height of 1 metre. It can often be seen in Arriyadh, particularly in cracks on the rocky edges of wadis. The branches with tiny spines in pairs grow from the ground and the 2–4 cm-small leaves are alternate; they have an ovate form and grey-green colour. The flowerbuds can be pickled to make capers, used in cooking. The beautiful flowers have four petals with stamens almost as long as the petals. The shrub is propagated by seed and cuttings. *Capparis decidua* has a number of common Arabic names including kerda and karir. The generic name is derived from the Arabic kapar. It is a slow-growing, small tree or shrub reaching a height of 5 metres and thrives on shallow, hard soils and stony outcrops. The *Capparis* is native to arid zones growing on rocky, clayey and silty soils in Africa, the Middle East and southern Asia. The branches seem to be leafless, because the leaves are only 2 mm in size. The bark turns silver-grey with time, and tiny spines in pairs are distributed over the branches. The flowers are bright red and conspicuous, and appear in small groups in spring and summer. In Africa, the fruits are used for camel fodder, where it is a very popular and useful plant in agroforestry. *C. decidua* grows on alkaline, sandy and gravelly soils. It is well adapted to drought, fire and frost. Both *Capparis* species are valuable for landscape design, afforestation and planting for erosion control. Low maintenance requirement.



GENERAL

Origin	: Mediterranean, sub-tropical, tropical
Vigour	: slow-growing
Humidity	: very arid, semi-arid, semi-humid
Propagation	: direct sowing, sowing and pricking out
Maintenance	: low

CONDITIONS

Urban climate	: resistant
Dessication	: resistant
Stagnant water	: vulnerable
Irrigation	: none
Salinity/ppm	: moderate (2000 ppm)
Hardiness	: -3°C

SHAPE

Type	: shrub
Height	: 0.3 m-1 m
Spread	: 0.6 m-2 m
Foliage	: deciduous

FLOWER

Colour	: white, purple
Size	: 5 cm - 7 cm
Period	: June - August

FRUIT

Type of fruit	: berry
Fruit size	: 3 cm - 5 cm
Toxicity	: edible when processed, edible