



Ziziphus spina-christi

Family name: **Rhamnaceae**Common name: **Rhamnaceae**

Local name: (سدر, نبق) Sidr



Wild



Role in Biodiversity

Ziziphus spina-christi improves soil quality by increasing available Phosphorus. It is used for erosion control due to its very deep taproot and spreading lateral roots. In some areas it can be an aggressive colonizer which forms spiny, impenetrable thickets that displace and outcompete native vegetation. It is very difficult to control once established and has an extraordinary regenerative capacity. In addition, the seeds have a hard, woody shell allowing them to remain viable for a long time.



Environment and Growing

Ziziphus spina-christi is a drought resistant species adapted to desert and semidesert habitats. It prefers alluvial plains with deep soils, but it also grows on clay and moderately saline soils. it can tolerate a dry season of 8–10 months.

Growth requirements:

- Mean annual rainfall range 50–500 mm.
- Mean annual temperature range 19–28°C.
- PH range 7–8.2.



Reproduction and Communication

Ziziphus spina-christi is bisexual and cross-pollinated plant. Flowers secrete considerable amounts of fragrant nectar and their stigma are shiny and receptive, attracting many insects, especially flies and honeybees.



Life span

25-50 years



Size

The tree may reach a height of 20 m.



Parts



Stem is very branched with pale or nearly white bark, twisted and flexible.

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Roots are very deep with spreading lateral roots.



Leaves are pale green, ovate-lanceolate or broadly elliptic.



Flowers are greenish-yellow, fragrant, in 10-30-flowered subsessile cymes.



Fruit red-brown, smooth, shiny, spherical.



Seeds are oval, brown with a hard, woody shell.

INTRODUCTION

Tree or small shrub

Ziziphus spina-christi is a shrub or tree that originates from the Sahara and Sahel regions of Africa and the Middle East and is adapted to grow in water-stressed habitats such as savannas and deserts. It is characterized by a thick crown and erect but mostly twisted stem. Branches have paired, brown spines, one is straight and directed forward and the others shorter and sharply recurved.

In Sudan, *Ziziphus spina-christi* is commonly distributed along the River Nile and its tributaries, in Khors, and in seasonal streams specially in Northern and central Sudan. The fruits, which are commonly known as **Nabag**, are one of the wild fruits eaten by people during the dry season in western Sudan. It is also a popular fruit eaten as a snack in many areas. The plant is highly valued for Sudanese herbal medicine.

LIVELIHOODS / CULTURE

Cultivation

Ziziphus spina-christi grows naturally as a wild plant. Some people like to plant one tree inside their homes or many trees can be planted as a fence for farms.

Cultural Value

- Fruits are eaten raw, fresh or dried. They are collected mostly in central and eastern Sudan and distributed all over the country.
- Dried fruits are ground into a powder, water is added and the mixture shaped into cakes.
- The leaves provide valuable animal fodder. Usually sheep and goats consume the fruits and camels consume the foliage.
- It is the most important tree for honey production within its native range.
- Branches are used for fencing, as wood for fuel, for construction and furniture making.
- The hard, heavy and termite resistant wood is used for roofing beams and tool handles.

Medicine and health

- Macerated fruits and leaves are used by Flata tribe in the Blue Nile State to treat stomach pain.
- Leaves are eaten raw by the Barti tribe in the Fangoga area, Sennar State to treat stomach pain while a bark decoction is used to treat tonsillitis.
- Bark maceration is used in Melit area (North Darfur) to treat kidney stones.
- A poultice of leaves and bark is used externally by people in many parts of Sudan for nourishing their hair.

Cultural Expressions

Villages named after it:

Al Sidaira

Al Sidr

THREATS

- Climate change.
- Human impact of cutting down for wood and fuel.
- Overgrazing.

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