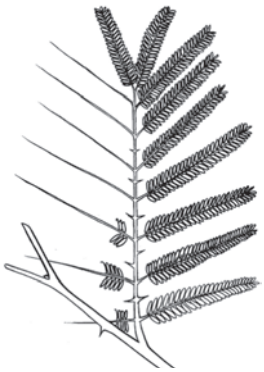
Mimosa pigra



PEA FAMILY

Fabaceae; Sub-family: Mimosaceae

COMMON NAMES

English: bashful bush, black mimosa, giant mimosa, giant sensitive plant Cambodia: banla uyyas, banla yuon, deoum klab yeik; Indonesia: ki kerbau, putri malu; Malaysia: kembang gajah, semalu gajah; Thailand: maiyaraap ton, mai yah raap yak; Vietnam: trinh nữ thân gỗ, trinh nữ đầm lầy

DESCRIPTION

Evergreen shrub or small tree (3–6 m high), forming dense thickets, young stems green, rounded, armed with scattered prickles (5–12 mm long), taproot is 1–2 m deep.

Bark: Older stems grey and woody.

Leaves: Yellowish-green, with short fine hairs below, twice-divided (20–31 cm long), straight thorn at the junction of each of the 6–16 pairs of leaflet branchlets, each branchlet with 20–45 pairs of small elongated leaflets (3–12 mm long and 0.5–2 mm wide), leaves fold together at night or when touched.

Flowers: Pink or mauve, in fluffy round heads (1–2 cm wide), borne singly or in groups of two or three, on stalks (2–7 cm long), arising from each upper leaf fork.

Fruits: Pods (several-seeded dry fruits that split open at maturity), green turning brown as they mature, flat and elongated (3–12 cm long and 7–14 mm wide), covered in bristly hairs, borne in clusters (1–30), break transversely into 14–26 segments; seeds greenish-brown to light brown (4–6 mm long and 2–2.5 mm wide).

ORIGIN

Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, French Guiana, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela.

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Green manure, nitrogen fixation, medicine, hedge/barrier and ornament.

INVADES

Roadsides, disturbed land, wastelands, urban open space, drainage ditches, irrigation channels, dams, riversides, floodplains, swamps, wetlands, lake edges and gullies.

IMPACTS

Dense infestations of *M. pigra* contribute to a decline in abundance and diversity of species of plants and animals. In Tram Chim National Park, Vietnam, it has reduced the density of native plant species threatening the vulnerable sarus crane (*Grus antigone* L.) (Triet and Dung, 2001). *M. pigra* thickets in Australia had fewer plants, birds and lizards, than native vegetation (Braithwaite *et al*., 1989). In Lochinvar National Park, Zambia, infestations reduced bird diversity by almost 50% and abundance by more than 95% (Shanungu, 2009). In Cambodia, farmers ranked mimosa as the most significant problem affecting rice farming, 'ahead of pests, rodents, and drought problems' (Chamroeun *et al*., 2002). *M. pigra* also hampers fishing activities and prevents access to water bodies.

Mimosa pigra L.