



Photo courtesy of J. Roshetko

Acacia (*Acacia leucophloea* [Roxb.] Willd.)

Acacia leucophloea (Roxb.) Willd. is native to large parts of South and Southeast Asia. Acacia is a promising species for agroforestry and especially for silvo-pastoral purposes. It can be used in sites that suffer from compaction as a result of overstocking. Being a nitrogen-fixing species, it is usually planted for soil improvement. Its open crown transmits enough light to permit crop cultivation under the trees. It is being planted around plantations as fire protection.

The bark's tannin is used in the leather industry and also in preparing fine beverages; the strong fibers are used to make fish nets. The wood of Acacia is used for indoor construction and sometimes for furniture. It is in demand as firewood and is very suitable for making charcoal. In Java, the germinated seeds are reported to be cooked as vegetable (hale). Stems and roots produce a gum that is used for medicinal purposes. The pods and foliage are a good source of protein-rich fodder.

Acacia is a deciduous tree or erect shrub, 10-35 m tall, with deep taproot, few secondary roots, pale bark and broadly umbelliform crown. Young trees often have dense thorny suckers; lower branches armed with paired straight or faintly curved stipular thorns, usually dark brown or black, less often white, up to



2.5 cm long. The leaves are bipinnate, pinnae 4-13 pairs, rachis 3.5 – 8.5 cm long, and leaflets in 6-30 pairs, linear, 3-11 mm x 0.5-1.7 mm. Inflorescences yellowish-white subglobose heads, ca. 1 cm diameter, in large terminal densely hairy panicles up to 30 cm long; peduncles 0.4-1.3 cm long. Flowers sessile, calyx 0.8-1.2 mm, corolla 1.2-2 mm long; stamens 20-25. Fruit linear, slightly curved or straight pod, 6-15(-20) cm x 7-11 mm x 3 mm, woody, glabrescent, dark brown, 5-12 (-20) seeded, indehiscent. Seeds are very variable: orbicular, ellipsoid or trapezoid, 5.5-6.5 mm x 4-5 mm, compressed, greyish brown.

– The Research Branch, ARCBC

