

vegetation

There is little information available about the extent and condition of the forest of the Eritrean Highlands, but it appears that greater parts of the Highlands were once covered by a forest, consisting mainly of *Juniperus procera* and *Olea africana*. Today, the forests are destroyed by the clearing of land for cultivation and the timber industry during the Italian colonialization. Throughout the Italian, British and Ethiopian rule, and during the wars, the forest has been exploited causing problems with soil erosion in many areas, as well as shortages in firewood. However, measures have been taken, and the Italians established plantations of *Eucalyptus*, *Berberis tselim* and *Acacia*. The post-liberation government has also taken measures through terracing and reforestation on eroded hill-sides. Many trees are slowly disappearing from the Eritrean landscape due to firewood scarcity, which is heavily affecting all big tree species alike.

Parts of Asmara also suffer from erosion, and high rainfall during parts of the year can cause grave problems. By planting trees within the city, erosion can also be prevented here.

Planting the right trees is important since water is scarce in the area. Not all plants and trees will be able to grow.



_euphorbia abyssinica
(kolqual)

The Euphorbia Abyssinica is abundant in some areas of the Central Highlands of Eritrea, and on the eastern and western escarpments.

sun exposure
light shade to full sun

growth habits
up to 4.5 m tall

watering needs
moderate water when growing



_opuntia ficus-indica
(beles)

The This cactus seems to have been introduced to Eritrea by Catholic Missionaries in the 1830s.

uses
mainly fruit crop

watering needs
Cacti are good crops for dry areas because they efficiently convert water into biomass.



_jacaranda

The Jacaranda is native to tropical and subtropical regions of South America, Central America, Mexico, and the Caribbean, but it's found in parts of Africa.

growth habits
2 to 30 m tall

watering needs
well drained soil and tolerates
drought and brief spells of frost and
freeze



_bougainvillea

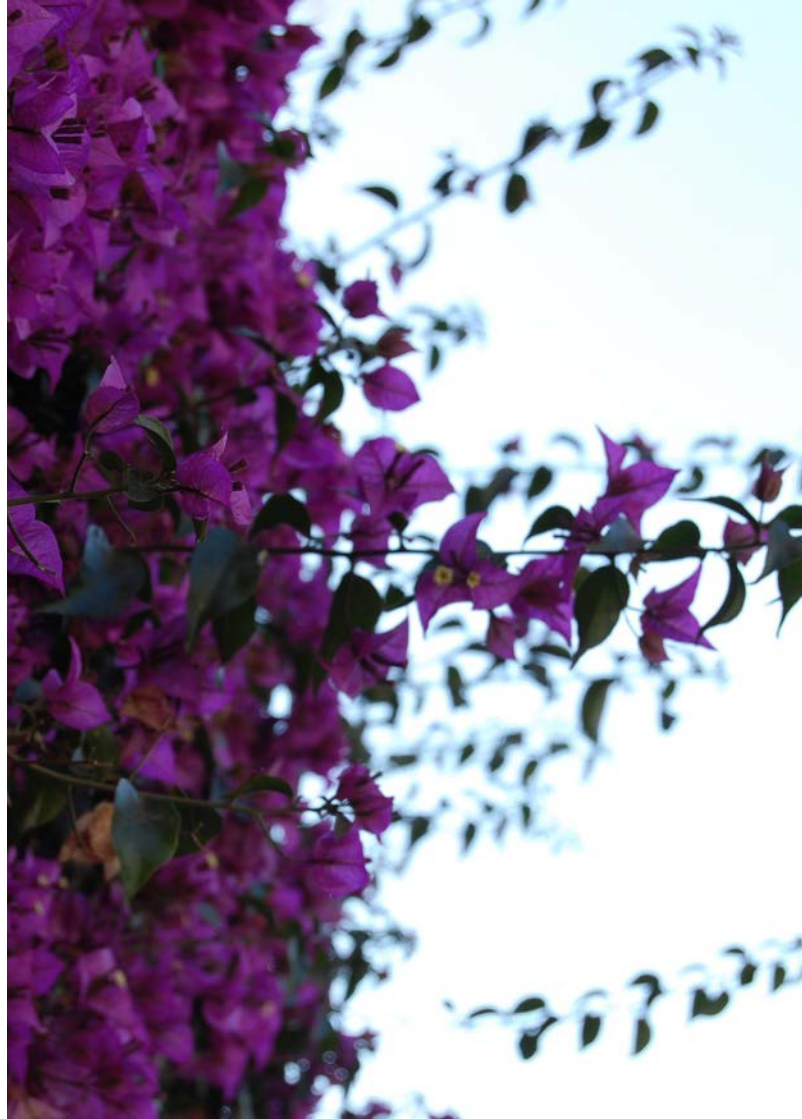
The bougainvillea is native to South America, but is abundant in Asmara.

growth habits

1-12 meters tall

watering needs

They are evergreen where rainfall occurs all year, or deciduous if there is a dry season.



_ficus vasta
(daero)

Ficus vasta is a fig tree of dry north and eastern Africa.

uses

Fruits are edible. Fruits are consumed in normal and in food shortage periods. Other uses of the species are firewood, timber for utensils, furniture and carvings.

growth habits

over 25 m tall

watering needs

moderate water when growing



Acacia abyssinica
(chea)

Used to dominate on the waterlogged plateaus of the central highlands, but has now become quite rare.

growth habits

growing to 6-7.5 m or taller, 6-9 m spread, often flat-topped

sun exposure

full sun to part sun, tolerates reflected heat

watering needs

moderate water use



Olea africana
(awliie)

The Olea Africana tree once covered large parts of the Highlands of Eritrea. It is a perennial, multi-stemmed, evergreen tree.

growth requirements

grows well in fertile, well drained soil.

growth habits

10m tall

watering needs

Found along waterways, in bush-land and on rocky hillsides.



Juniperus procera
(awliie)

This tree among the economically and ecologically valuable trees that still grow in the Highlands. It has now become rare, but the greater part of the Highlands of Eritrea was once covered by this tree.

uses

It is used for firewood, charcoal, poles, posts and timber for floor and roof shingles and furniture.

growth habits

20-25m



schinus molle
(berbere tselim)

Among the economically and ecologically valuable trees that still grow in the Highlands. It has now become rare, but it once covered the greater part of the Highlands of Eritrea.

uses

firewood, charcoal, poles, posts and timber for floor and roof shingles and furniture.

growth habits

15 m tall

5-10 m wide



After clearing a great part of the forest of the Eritrean Highlands for construction, the Italians established Plantations of Eucalyptus on marginal lands and along riverbanks and watersheds. It is a popular tree, mostly because of its fast grow rate and its straight tall trunk.

growth requirements

has adverse environmental effects, including excessive water and nutrient requirements.

growth habits

10-30 m tall

_eucalyptus



_one of the fastest-growing plants on Earth; it has been measured surging skyward as fast as 100 cm in a 24-hour period.

_has the potential to grow to full height and girth in a single growing season of 3-4 months.

_ready for harvest and suitable for use in construction within about 3 - 7 years.

_bamboo



Rumex nervosus
(hehot)

Rumex nervosus is frequent in the highlands, and often an indicator of secondary vegetation.

growth habits
up to 4 m tall

uses
medical use

