

Scientific Name:

Vachellia nilotica (formerly known as *Acacia nilotica*)

Common Name:

- Gum Arabic Tree
- Nile Acacia
- Babool

Distinct Features:

- **Growth:** A medium-sized tree that typically grows to a height of 5-20 meters, with a dense, rounded crown. The trunk can reach up to 1 meter in diameter and is often twisted or crooked.
- **Leaves:** The leaves are small, feathery, and bipinnate, consisting of numerous leaflets arranged in pairs. Each leaf is about 2-10 cm long, giving the tree a fern-like appearance. The leaflets are small, measuring about 1-3 mm in length.
- **Flowers:** The flowers are small, ball-shaped, and yellow, borne in clusters. They have numerous long stamens that give them a fluffy appearance. The flowering occurs in spring and summer, attracting various pollinators, especially bees.
- **Fruits:** The fruit is a flat, curved pod that measures about 5-15 cm long and contains several seeds. The pods turn brown when mature and are often twisted.
- **Bark:** The bark is dark gray to black, rough, and deeply fissured, providing a textured appearance.

Cultural Importance:

- *Vachellia nilotica* is culturally significant in many regions of Africa and Asia. It is often associated with traditional practices, especially in rural communities, where it is used for various purposes.
- The tree is valued for its ecological role in preventing soil erosion and improving soil fertility.

Uses:

- **Medicinal:**
 - Various parts of the tree are used in traditional medicine for their antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, and astringent properties. The gum produced by the tree is also used in herbal remedies.
- **Gum Production:**
 - The tree is a source of gum arabic, which is harvested for its thickening and stabilizing properties in food and pharmaceutical industries.
- **Wood:**

- The wood is dense and durable, used for making furniture, tools, and charcoal. It is also used for fencing and construction.
- Forage:
 - The leaves and pods are edible and are used as fodder for livestock, especially in arid regions.

Picture Description:

- **Whole Tree:** A medium-sized tree with a dense, rounded crown and twisted trunk, often displaying clusters of yellow flowers.
- **Leaves:** Small, feathery, bipinnate leaves with numerous tiny leaflets arranged in pairs, giving a fern-like appearance.
- **Flower:** Ball-shaped yellow flowers borne in clusters, with numerous long stamens creating a fluffy look.
- **Fruit:** Flat, curved pods measuring about 5-15 cm long that turn brown when mature and contain several seeds.
- **Bark:** Dark gray to black bark that is rough and deeply fissured, adding texture to the trunk.

