

## Plants in Arid Lands and Their Utilization (2)

In the last issue, we wrote that rough rules between location and vegetation are recognizable around Al Ain, UAE. This time we would like to concentrate on mountain area and the main vegetation around the area. Most parts of the mountain area are steep, rocky and the soil is not fertile. Sparse vegetation of *Acacia tortilis* etc. can be recognized around the mountain and the gravel plain. Relatively long wadi and shallow gully run near the foot of mountains. Although water can be found occasionally only in winter season, there is no perennial flow. *A. tortilis*, *Zizyphus spina-christi*, *Prosopis cineraria* etc. grow around wadi in the mountain area.



Mountain area in Hatta



Wadi running in the mountain area (Masfut)

### 1) *Acacia tortilis* (*Acacia raddiana*)



#### Characteristics:

Widely distributed in Africa, India & Middle East. The leaf is compound leaf. It has long and strong spine.

#### Condition of growth:

Xerophyte. Annual precipitation under 100mm, alkaline soil, shallow soil layer, high temperature (up to 50°C).



#### Usage:

High quality firewood & charcoal, feed, fence, or forest against the sand.

Others: It is called umbrella tree for its shape.

### 2) *Zizyphus spina-christi*



#### Characteristics:

Widely distributed in Middle East, near the Mediterranean & South west Asia. The leaf is oval shape. There are short spines. Bear fruits of about 2cm in size.

#### Condition of growth:

Xerophyte. Annual precipitation under 100mm, high ground water table, alluvial soil, maximum temperature 50 .



Usage: Fruits are edible & also used for feeding. It can be used as timber.

Roots grow deeply and prevent erosion.

Others: It was the spine crown of Christ. Belongs to the same group of jujube tree of Japan.