

Plants in Arid Lands and Their Utilization (5)

PART 5 : Interdunal Plain and Wadi



Wadi near the dune area

The alluvial plain under the dune is appeared on the surface at the interdunal plain. The soil of the alluvial plain is sandy but finer than dune sands, and the lower layer is often very hard. Wadis around Al Ain are running from east to west (from Oman mountains to dunes). However, you can hardly see water flow, not more than once a year. Wadis near dunes are covered with sand and those in flat land or interdunal plain is covered with relatively fine soil. Typical plants in the interdunal plain are *Zygophyllum hamience* and *Prosopis cinerarea*. *Calotropis procera*, *Citrullus colocynthis* and *Prosopis cinerarea* grow around wadi. *Schweinfurthia papillionacea* and *Cassia italica*

can be seen around oasis.

1) *Calotropis procera*



Characteristics: Grows up to 5m tall. New branches are white and have smooth bark. Old branches are brown and their bark is rough. Leaves can grow upto 18cm long. Flowers bloom from March to September. The edge of a petal is purple and the inside is white. Bears dehiscent fruits. Seeds burst when ripen and achenes with hairs spread over.

Condition of growth: Seen at wadi or lowland where soil water

content is relatively high. Fits to any kind of soil.

Use: The latex is very noxious. Used as medicine for suppuration and eczema. Also used to make poisoned arrows. The ash is material of gunpowder. Camels and goats eat unripen fruits and flowers.



Others: Dangerous to touch due to its poisonous latex.

2) *Zygophyllum hamience*



Characteristics: Spreads largely along the Arabian Gulf area. The whole shape looks like a half globe of 50cm to 1m in diameter. Occasionally grows up to 3m. Leaves are green or yellow-green, and the succulent contains salty liquid. Flowers bloom in winter (September to March). The size of the fruits is 2cm, and the shape is similar to the leaf.

Condition of growth: Strong halophyte. Grows on salt accumulated land.

Use: Dead trees are used as firewood. Camels eat sprouts.

