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# Zelalem Silasse

Adjacent to the large Tara Gedam Monastery forest this hill top woodland is small but rich in species. The local community is keen to see the remaining of the hill summit planted with native trees to expand the woodland cover. Grazing by domestic animals and the spread of invasive species are the main threats facing this woodland



Name: **Zelalem Silasse**

Status: church

Site Code: GD04

Floristic Region: GD

Region: 3 (South Gondar)

Altitude: 2220 m

Latitude: 12° 07' N

Longitude: 37° 44' S

Woodland/forest:

Status: relict

Size: < 1 ha

Dominant species:

canopy: *Euphorbia candelabrum*,  
*Grewia ferruginea*, *Olea europaea* ssp  
*cuspidata*

shrub: *Calpurnia aurens*, *Justicia*  
*schimperiana*, *Maytenus obscura*

No of woody species: 46

No of species with less than 5 individuals: 2

Threats: grazing

Photograph: The church woodland is restricted to the northern top part of the hill. The community is keen to see the whole summit of the hill being planted with native trees.

Zelalem Silasse woodland is located at the northwest end of a small hill protruding on the mountain slopes just South of Tara Gedam monastery (see Tara Gedam site account for details). It overlooks the vast plain stretching to the West of Lake Tana.

This church woodland lacks trees of great size and has a very limited shrub and ground layers. The church is situated on a piece of flatter ground below the hill's summit.

The surrounding countryside is moderately densely populated and all fertile land is cultivated. Other areas consist of secondary scrub used by domestic animals as grazing land. Uphill, to the North, there is the large Tara Gedam forest and some substantial tracts of exotic tree plantations.

### History

The history of site is unknown but the church has been established for probably at least hundred years. The church serves the small rural local community living around the hill.



On the hill summit there is this large area (> 1 ha) with limited woody plant cover that the local community would like to see planted with native trees.

### Threats

This church woodland suffers from very little shrub cutting, however the impact of grazing is much greater. Indeed ground vegetation and natural regeneration of tree species are either absent or for the former very localised.

### Management

Some degree of control of livestock grazing would be desirable especially during a period when natural regeneration of woody plants may prove successful. Current and recent dry years have probably not provided the favourable conditions for this process to take place.

The local community is keen to see the whole summit of the hill planted with native tree species to expand the existing woodland. However, they have neither the knowledge to propagate the native trees or the resources to do so. They hope for outside help to carry out such a project. Water

### Conservation status

Considering its small size Zelalem Silasse woodland is species rich and it even has a species not recorded from the nearby, but much larger, Tara Gedam monastery.



The undergrowth of the woodland has little woody plant cover, natural regeneration of trees being nearly totally absent.

availability is a further difficulty as the villagers have difficulties in meeting their own basic needs.