1. MELIA VOLKENSII

Farmers' preferences

A study by Stewart and Blomley (1994) on use of *Melia volkensii* in a semi-arid agroforestry system in Kenya shows that *it* is a multipurpose tree producing a range of products. A product ranking exercise was carried out and found that the main reason for growing melia is for timber and poles (Table 1).

Table 1: Farmers' reasons for planting *Melia volkensii* (N = 37)

Ranking	Uses	Product priorities (% respondents)			
		1st	2nd	3rd	4th
1	Timber	81	19		
2	Poles	19	54	27	
3	Beehive		19	51	8
4	Fodder		3	16	19
5	Mortar				8
6	Medicine			5	19
7	Firewood		3		8

Source: Stewart 1994

Extent of adoption

A study by Mwamburi. et al (2005) on traditional methods used by farmers to break seed dormancy in melia (Gurke) in Eastern and Coast provinces of Kenya involved interviews with farmers from 6 districts growing melia. The study found that there is presence of melia trees of various ages on the farms. Most farmers interviewed had over 50 melia trees. The study also shows that most (65%) respondents had been engaged in planting melia for over 15 years. Timber for own use was the main reason why the respondents planted melia except for the carpenters and timber dealers whose reason was for sale.

Mulatya (2000) indicates that, farmers in semi-arid areas of Kenya, particularly Kitui, Lower Embu, Makueni and Kibwezi districts, grow melia as an income generating timber species.

Economics of production

Stewart and Blomley (1994) in a study on melia use in semi-arid Kenya indicates that, individual mature, standing trees (20 years) cost about USD 15 equivalent when sold for timber in 1994.

Marketing

A study by Wekesa et al (2005) on marketing study of ecological resource products in semi-arid areas of Kenya shows that timber prices are variable based on timber size and tree species. The trees were sold as sawlogs at lower prices compared to sales as timber (Table 2).

Table 2: Profit margins of *M. volkensii* as sawlog and timber in Kenya

Type of Product	Activity	Cost	Quantity	Unit price	Profit Margin
Sawlog	Production of 10 year old	2.12	1 sawlog	8.23	6.11

Timber (4x2)	Sawlog	4.67	8 pieces of 8 ft each	0.40	12.13
	Processing	6.67			
	Transport to centre	2.13			
	Total Cost	15.59			18.24

Source: Wekesa et al 2005

Further reading

Mulatya, J., Tefera, A., Wilson,J. (2000) Farmers to Farmers Extension Workshop, by KEFRI and ICRAF, held at Kibwezi on 26th-29th March.

Mwamburi, A. et al (2005) on traditional methods used by farmers to break seed dormancy in *Melia volkensii* (Gurke) in Eastern and Coast provinces of Kenya. Intensified Social Forestry Project in Semi – arid Areas (ISFP), KEFRI, Kenya.

Stewart, M. and Blomley, T. (1994). Use of Melia Volkensii in a semi-arid agroforestry system in Kenya. Common Forestry Review 73 (2) 128-131.

Wekesa, L. et al (2005). Marketing Study of Ecological Resource Products. Intensified Social Forestry Project in Semi-arid Areas (ISFP)