

*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*

Oleaceae

## North America

**COMMON NAMES:** **English:** Mexican ash; **Kikuyu:** Munyukwa.

**DESCRIPTION:** A spreading, shapely, deciduous tree to 15 m.

**BARK:** Grey, becoming darker and cracking with age.

**LEAVES:** Compound, opposite, to 30 cm, **crowded** at the ends of branches, leaflets **spear-shaped, often unequal-sided, edge irregularly toothed, up to 18 cm. Dark brown leaf buds** conspicuous before they open and new lime-green leaves appear. **FLOWERS:** Without petals, **male stamens purple-brown**, female separate, very small, both in terminal sprays. **FRUIT:** Single **winged seeds**, up to 5 cm, on thin stalks, hanging a long time **in clusters on the tree**.

**ECOLOGY:** Ash trees are usually native to temperate zones but a few extend to the tropics. Fairly widely planted in the Kenya highlands 1,500–2,800 m, e.g. in Nairobi and Eldoret. Agroclimatic Zones II–III.

**USES:** Firewood, timber, posts, medicine, fodder (leaves), bee forage, shade, ornamental, windbreak, firebreak.

**PROPAGATION:** Seedlings.

**SEED:** 26,000–28,000 seeds per kg.

**treatment:** Remove the wing of the seed before sowing.

**MANAGEMENT:** Pollarding.

**REMARKS:** The tree has potential for wider use at higher altitudes as a shade and fodder tree and for general timber. It is used as a firebreak in Elburgon Forest. *Fraxinus* is mainly a northern temperate genus with several dozen species, particularly common in North America.

**FURTHER READING:** Dharani, 2002; Mbuya et al., 1994; Noad and Birnie, 1989.

