

Sambucus africana

Caprifoliaceae

Indigenous

Ecology: A common shrub only recorded from Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania. It is found in upland grassland, evergreen bushland, upland rain forest and in openings in montane forests associated with *Olea*, *Podocarpus* and *Afrocrania* near the bamboo zone. It may be dominant after bamboo has flowered and died. It is also cultivated by highland farmers. At lower altitudes it may be a tree.

Uses: Firewood, food (fruits), ornamental, live fence.

Description: A fleshy herb or woody shrub usually 1-2 m but up to 5 m, the stem juicy at first but later woody at the base, pithy or hollow; young shoots hairy. **LEAVES: pinnate, reaching 75 cm with 6-11 leaflets, the leaflets large with edges sharply toothed and a long pointed tip about 12 cm long and 4 cm across, leaflets one-sided** or attached to the leaf stalk, up to 12 cm with leafy stipules at the base. **FLOWERS: small, white** and sweetly scented in a **flattened head 7-15 cm across, calyx tube pinkish and ribbed, 5 tiny white petals, tube shorter than lobes and 5 stamens hanging out**. **FRUIT:** a small purple-black edible berry, only 7 mm, oblong and ribbed containing 3-4 hard red-brown seeds.

Propagation: Seedlings, wildings.

Seed: Collected when mature off older fruiting plants,

treatment: not necessary,

storage: sow as soon as collected.

Management: Fast growing. Coppicing, pruning, trimming.

Remarks: At lower altitudes the species can be planted as a hedge, ornamental or for firewood.

