

## Teclea nobilis

Del.

Rutaceae

### LOCAL NAMES

Amharic (atesa); English (small fruited teclea); Luganda (mubio)

### BOTANIC DESCRIPTION

*Teclea nobilis* is an unarmed evergreen shrub or tree (3-)5-12 m high or much taller in rain forest; bark smooth or grey; branchlets glabrous.

Leaves trifoliolate, occasionally 2-or 1 foliolate; petiole 1.5-6(-8) cm long, terete or sometimes slightly grooved at the apex usually glabrous; leaflets subsessile or with a petiolulate up to 10 mm long, oblong-elliptic, 5-15(-18) cm long, 1.5-4(-5.5) cm broad, acute to acuminate at the apex, narrowly cuneate at the base, glabrous, but sometimes puberulous on the midrib; lateral nerves numerous.

Inflorescence of terminal and axillary panicles 4-15(-21) cm long, glabrous. Flowers polygamous. Sepals 4, united into a cupuliform calyx 0.6-0.8 mm long; lobes small, ovate, ciliate. Petals 4(-5), narrowly elliptic, 3.5-4 mm long, 1.5-1.7 mm broad. Male flowers with 4(-5) stamens 3-5.5 mm long; anthers basifixed; rudimentary ovary slender and glabrous. Female flower with 4 or 5 staminodes 0.5-1.2 mm long. Ovary subglobose, 1-1.4 mm in diameter, glabrous unilocular, 2-ovulate; style up to 0.5 mm long; stigma disk-shaped and peltate, 1 mm in diameter, red, glabrous, barely foveolate, wrinkled when dry, 1-seeded.

Fruit yellow, orange or red, round or ellipsoid becoming wrinkled, 6-8 x 5-6 mm.

Seed ovoid, 5.5-6 mm long. The specific epithet *nobilis* is after the Latin word "nobilissimus" meaning noble or reknowned.

### BIOLOGY

Dispersal of seeds in *T. nobilis* seems to rely little on frugivorous birds.



Fruit and foliage (Bob Bailis)



bole (Bob Bailis)



*T. nobilis* leaves (Bob Bailis)

**ECOLOGY**

A large tree found in evergreen forest, riverine forest and woodland. Commonly associated with Podocarpus and Juniperus. In Uganda it grows in colonizing forests, thickets, forest edges and mixed forest from lowland to lower montane areas.

**BIOPHYSICAL LIMITS**

Altitude: 900-2 600 m

Mean annual rainfall: 1 200-2 500 mm

Mean annual temperature: 18-26 deg.C

**DOCUMENTED SPECIES DISTRIBUTION**

Native: Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda

Exotic:



The map above shows countries where the species has been planted. It does neither suggest that the species can be planted in every ecological zone within that country, nor that the species can not be planted in other countries than those depicted. Since some tree species are invasive, you need to follow biosafety procedures that apply to your planting site.

**PRODUCTS**

Food: The fruit is edible.

Apiculture: The fragrant flowers are a source of nectar and pollen for bees.

Fuel: Provides good fuelwood.

Timber: The wood is used to make bows, tool handles, barkcloth mallets, clubs and walking sticks. Poles obtained from the tree are used for house construction. The wood is tough, strong, durable predisposing it to overexploitation in its native range.

Essential oil:

Medicine: The leaf or root decoction mixed with honey is used against pneumonia in Kenya. The roots are used as an anthelmintic. The steam inhalation of the leaves reportedly cures fever.

**SERVICES**

Shade or shelter: This tree provides excellent shade.

Soil improver: The leaf litter enriches underlying soil.

Boundary or barrier or support: Poles obtained from the tree are used for fencing and construction.

**TREE MANAGEMENT**

A moderate to slow growing tree. Can be managed by coppicing and pollarding.

**GERMPLASM MANAGEMENT**

T. nobilis is not a prolific seeder, has about 20 000 seeds/kg. Germination rates and seed viability are low.

**FURTHER READNG**

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**SUGGESTED CITATION**

Orwa C, Mutua A , Kindt R , Jamnadass R, Simons A. 2009. *Agroforestry Database: a tree reference and selection guide version 4.0* (<http://www.worldagroforestry.org/af/treedb/>)