Tecomaria capensis (Thunb.) Spach

Bignoniaceae

LOCAL NAMES
Afrikaans (kaapse kanferfoelie); English (tecoma,kaffir honeysuckle,cape honeysuckle); Xhosa (icakatha); Zulu (uminyane,ugcangca,uchacha)

BOTANIC DESCRIPTION
Tecomaria capensis is an evergreen scrambler to small tree with a roundish crown. Bark pale brown, lenticelled with longitudinal furrows on old stems.

Leaves opposite, unevenly compound, up to 13 cm long, with 2-5 pairs of leaflets, terminal leaflet largest, margins coarsely toothed, glossy green above.

Fruit a narrow, flat pod-like capsule up to 13 cm long.

Seeds with large papery wings.

There are 3 garden cultivars; “coccinea” with light red flowers on a bushy plant, “lutea” with bright yellow flowers on a spreading bush and “salmonii” with salmon-coloured flowers. The genus Tecomaria is monotypic and has affinities with Tecoma.

BIOLOGY
The cape honeysuckle is dioecious and evergreen; usually flowering after rains from June-November and fruiting from October-February. Pollinated by birds and insects.

Calyx 5-lobed, much shorter than corolla-tube. Corolla bilabiate, tube curved, narrowly funnel-shaped; one lip 2-lobed; all lobes elliptic, obtuse. Stamens didynamous, inserted in lower part of corolla-tube, exserted; filaments terete; anthers 2-thecous with thecae at length separating. Style terete, exserted, with elliptic, 2-lobed stigma. (Botha R)

Vagrant mites of the Eriophyoidea were found on this material, but they were probably not the cause of the clustered, small, narrow leaflets, that may be herbicide damage. (Neser S)

A yellow variety of Tecomaria capensis. Popular garden plant. Indigenous to South Africa. (Botha R)

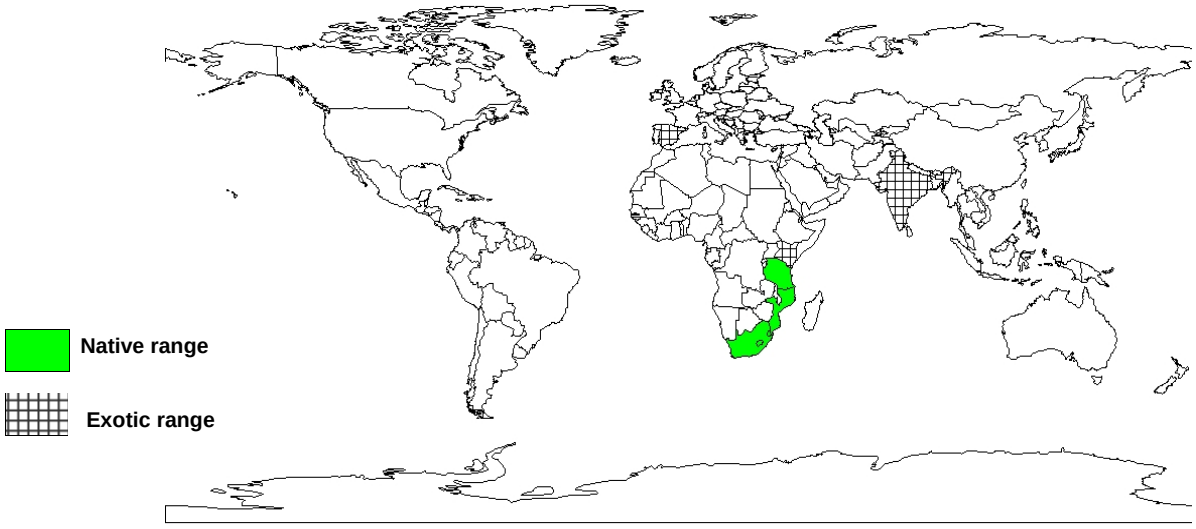
ECOLOGY
T. capensis occurs on forest margins but more commonly along drainage lines in dense woodland. Grows well in moist areas and in dry scrub and woodland.

BIOPHYSICAL LIMITS
Altitude: 0-1 200 m
Mean annual temperature: 22-26 deg.C
Mean annual rainfall: 750-1 750 mm

Soil type: Grows in a variety of soils types.

DOCUMENTED SPECIES DISTRIBUTION

Native: Lesotho, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania
Exotic: India, Kenya, Singapore, Spain, United Kingdom



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
Fodder: Foliage readily browsed by stock and game.

Apiculture: The flowers are rich in nectar thus attract a number of pollinators especially sunbirds and bees.

Fuel: The plant can be used as firewood.

Medicine: Powdered bark used for treatment of fever, pneumonia and stomach troubles, also rubbed on bleeding gums to promote blood clotting. Leaf decoction used for diarrhoea and for intestinal inflammation. Believed to ease pain and produce sleep.

SERVICES
Erosion control: The cape honeysuckle protects surrounding soil from erosion.

Apiculture: The cape honeysuckle is a rich source of sugar.

Shade or shelter: Unpruned trees provide adequate shade

Soil improver: The leaf litter on decomposition improves soil fertility.

Ornamental: A prized ornamental with a showy and profuse bloom, cultivated in several gardens, parks and arboreta.

Boundary or barrier or support: The cape honeysuckle is a wonderful fencing plant with good regrowth ability after pruning and normally dense and colourful foliage over a long time.

TREE MANAGEMENT
The cape honeysuckle must be pruned, to stay attractive in gardens and enhance flowering. The plant grows fast usually flowering in the second year. Growing should be done in semi shade or full sun conditions. The plant is frost tender and should be protected during the first two winters.

GERMPLASM MANAGEMENT
Seed wings removal must be done before planting.

PESTS AND DISEASES
The pathogenic fungus Phytophthora palmivora has been detected on T. capensis leaves.

FURTHER READNG

Paez JI, Berra D, Vega JM and Tello J. 1993. Identification of Phytophthora palmivora Butler in the gardens of the World Fair of Sevilla (EXPO-92). Boletin de Sanidad Vegetal, Plagas. 19(4): 633-647.

Palmer E, Pitman N. 1972. Trees of Southern Africa Vol. 2. A.A. BalKema Cape Town.

Venter F, Venter J-A. 1996. Making the most of Indigenous trees. Briza Publications.

SUGGESTED CITATION

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