

Albizia gummifera

Fabaceae (Mimosaceae)

Indigenous

COMMON NAMES: **Kamba:** Kisya, Musya, Mwethia; **Kikuyu:** Mukurue; **Kipsigis:** Seet, Seyet; **Kisii:** Omugonjoro; **Luhya:** Mukhonzuli; **Luhya (Bukusu):** Kumulukhu; **Malakote:** Motemwelo; **Maasai:** Ormoso, Olsamakupe, Osapukupes; **Marakwet:** Se, Set, Ste; **Meru:** Mukuruwe; **Nandi:** Seet, Seyet; **Pokomo:** Mchachampili; **Pokot:** Ses; **Samburu:** Sogore, Sogorogurri; **Swahili:** Mchani mbao; **Taita:** Msarawachi; **Taveta:** Kiririgiti, Kiririgwi; **Tugen:** Se, Set, Seot; **Turkana:** Ekakwait, Ekewait.

DESCRIPTION: A large deciduous tree, branches ascending to a flat top, to 20 m or more, trunk up to 75 cm in diameter. **BARK:** Grey and usually smooth. **LEAVES:** Shiny, dark green leaflets, almost rectangular, usually less than 3 cm long, midrib diagonal, one outer corner rounded. **FLOWERS:** White-pink clusters, long stamens hang out, tips crimson. **FRUIT:** Very many pods in bundles, shiny brown, flat with raised edges, 20 cm long, 3 cm wide, often shorter.

ECOLOGY: A forest tree found from West Africa east to Ethiopia and south to Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Madagascar. The most common *Albizia* in humid and subhumid parts of Kenya, 0–2,400 m, from coastal hills to western Kenya. Very common in Nairobi and adjoining districts. Also found in Marsabit, Kakamega and Mara at forest edges and in riverine forests. Agroclimatic Zones II–IV. Very common in Zone III. Flowers in March–May and seeds in October–November in Bungoma.

USES: Firewood, timber, bee hives, utensils (mortars, water troughs), boat building, medicine (pods, roots, bark), fodder (mainly goats), bee forage, ornamental, mulch, nitrogen-fixing, soil conservation, leaves used to speed up the ripening of bananas.

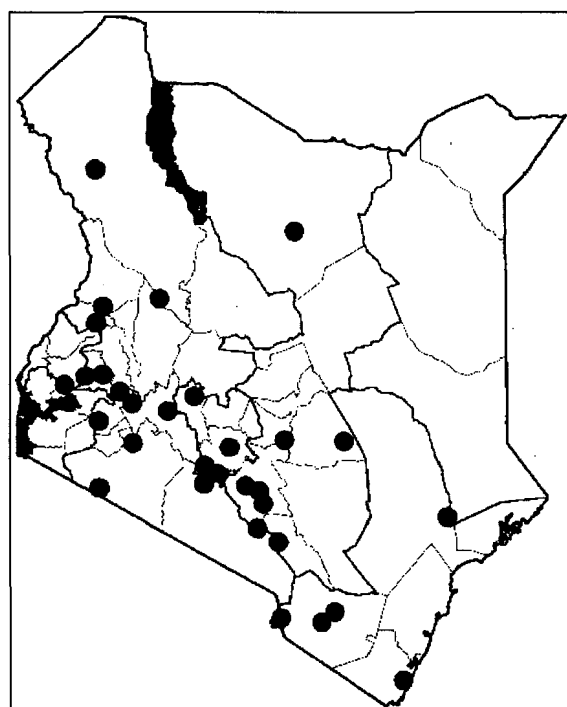
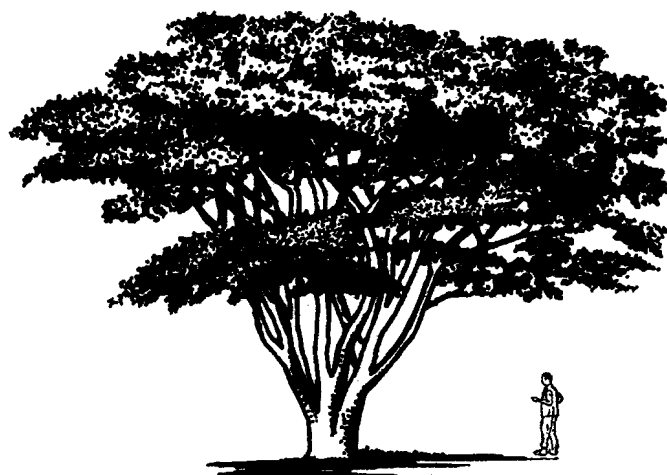
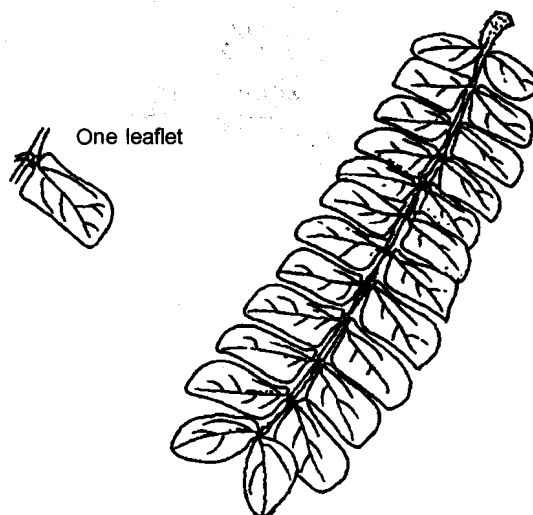
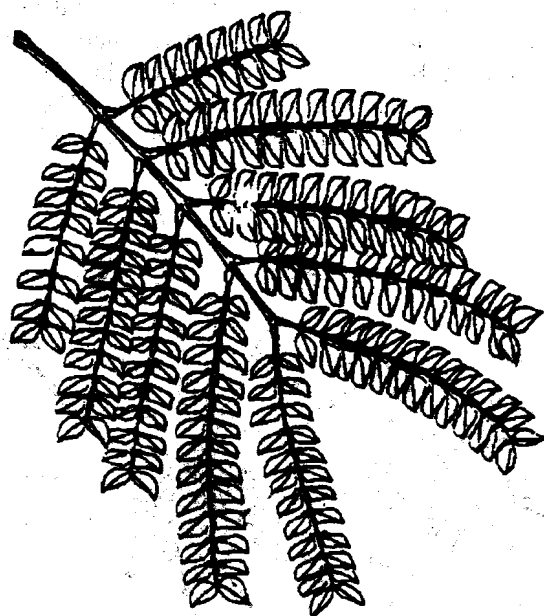
PROPAGATION: Seedlings, produces root suckers.

SEED: 10,000–14,000 seeds per kg. Germination rate 40–60%.

treatment: Fresh seed requires no pretreatment. Previously stored seeds should be nicked or soaked in cold water for 24 hours.

storage: Seed can be stored for long periods but very susceptible to insect attack.

MANAGEMENT: Fairly fast growing, lopping, pollarding, coppicing while young.



***Albizia gummifera* (cont)**

REMARKS: Seed should be collected while still on the tree to prevent insect damage. Timber is not very durable, rather soft and light. Bees are often found inhabiting holes within the trunk. The trunk exudes clear gum. The *A. gummifera* found in Kenya belong to var. *gummifera*.

FURTHER READING: Albrecht, 1993; Backes and Ahenda, 1998; Beentje, 1994; Bekele-Tesemma et al., 1993; Dharani, 2002; Fichtl and Adi, 1994; Katende et al., 1995; Kokwaro, 1993; Mbuya et al., 1994; National Academy of Sciences, 1979; Noad and Birnie, 1989; Palgrave and Palgrave, 2002; Sommerlatte and Sommerlatte, 1990; Storrs, 1979.

