

Antiaris toxicaria**Moraceae****Indigenous**

STANDARD/TRADE NAME: Antiaris, False iroko.

COMMON NAMES: **Digo:** Mnguunguo; **English:** False mvule; **Giriama:** Mnguunguo; **Luhya:** Mulundu; **Luo:** Olua madhako, Olua; **Swahili:** Mkunde.

DESCRIPTION: A magnificent deciduous tree of the forest canopy, often 20 m, up to 40 m, the crown rounded, branchlets drooping. A large tree may have a **tall clear bole** with some buttresses at the base. **BARK:** **Smooth, pale grey**, marked with lenticel dots and ring marks. When cut, **thin cream latex** drips out, becoming darker. **LEAVES:** Variable, usually oval, 5–16 cm x 4–11 cm, often widest towards the apex with a blunt or pointed tip, **the base unequal and rounded**. Saplings and coppice shoots have long narrow leaves, the **edge toothed**, but rarely in mature leaves. Leaves **rough, papery with stiff hairs above** but softer below. **FLOWERS:** Small male flowers **yellow-green**, in clusters about 1.5 cm across, growing just below leaves. Female flowers in **disc- or kidney-shaped heads** to 3 cm across. **FRUIT:** **Bright red, dull and furry, 1.5 cm long**, scarlet and velvety when mature; the swollen receptacle contains just **one seed**. The soft fruit is liked by birds, bats, monkeys and antelope and therefore dispersed by them.

ECOLOGY: A tree found from Sierra Leone, east to Sudan and south to Angola in moist forests. In Kenya, found in the Lake basin and at the coast (Shimba Hills, kaya forests, Gede Forest), mainly in remnant forests, 0–400 m (coast) and 1,350–1,700 m inland in moist forests (Kakamega Forest, Kisii). Agroclimatic Zones I–II. Fruits December–March (Coast, Kakamega) also August–September at the coast (less common).

USES: Timber, veneer, boat building (canoes), medicine (leaves, roots), fodder, barkcloth.

PROPAGATION: Wildings and seedlings (sow seeds in pots).

SEED: Large amounts of seed; easy to collect from the ground.

treatment: None.

storage: Loses viability quickly; sow as soon as collected.

MANAGEMENT: Fast growing, attaining full size within 20 years.

REMARKS: The tree does not compete with crops. Plant individual trees for shade, as avenue trees or as a pure stand. There is little difference between heart and sapwood; it is yellow-white and soft, easily attacked by termites and borers. It can make a tough veneer for the plywood industry.

FURTHER READING: Beentje, 1994; Katende et al., 1995; Sommerlatte and Sommerlatte, 1990.

