

Apodytes dimidiata

Icacinaceae

Indigenous

STANDARD/TRADE NAME: Pear wood, White pear.

COMMON NAMES: **Bondei:** Mfret; **Digo:** Mungowengowe, Mtsunga mbuzi; **English:** Pear wood, White pear; **Kikuyu:** Mugonyoni, Muchogi; **Kipsigis:** Chesimboliet; **Luhya:** Masaba, Wanda; **Luo:** Lemo, Luochuoga, Ochond obok; **Maasai:** Oldiasimbol; **Meru:** Mwiramwanki; **Samburu:** Arakaulu, Eyaonet; **Swahili:** Mlambusi mbage; **Tugen:** Orisuet; **Turkana:** Epikororok.

DESCRIPTION: A tall evergreen forest tree, growing to 25 m in high-rainfall areas but elsewhere smaller and more rounded, often branching at the base. **Trunk often ridged in large trees**, branchlets generally thin and **rather right-angled**. **BARK:** Pale grey-brown, fairly smooth, darker, flaking and slightly fissured with age. **LEAVES:** Alternate, **shiny dark green above, drying black**; shape variable, usually oval, up to 13 cm long but often smaller; tip tapering, edge very regularly wavy, sometimes slightly toothed, midrib paler, ridged only below, other veins inconspicuous, dividing irregularly. **Young leaf stalks and part of the midrib are reddish**. **FLOWERS:** Small, delicate, white, **star-like** with black anthers, fragrant, in striking sprays at the end of branches over much of the tree. **The flowering branchlets persist after the flowers fade**, giving the tree a twiggy appearance. **FRUIT:** Small, 8 mm, flattened, black, with a **fleshy scarlet appendage on one side** giving the fruit a kidney shape.

ECOLOGY: Distributed in most countries in eastern and Central Africa southwards to Mozambique and South Africa. Also on Madagascar, the Comoros and Mascarene Islands, India, tropical Asia and as far east as south-western China and the Moluccas. In Kenya, widely distributed from the coast to 2,400 m, in forest ranging from the Shimba Hills to Kakamega Forest; common in the wet regions of southern and eastern Mt Kenya and occasionally found around Nairobi. Also in dry forests, forest edges, remnants, in clump bushland and in coastal woodland. May be locally dominant in dry forest. Agroclimatic Zones I–III.

USES: Firewood, charcoal, timber (construction, indoor carpentry, doors, veneer), tool handles, medicine (bark), bee forage, ornamental.

PROPAGATION: Seedlings.



MANAGEMENT: Slow growing.

REMARKS: The wood is light pink and very hard, earlier much favoured for making wagon wheels; easy to plane and polish. Pieces of wood are used as earplugs by the Maasai. Honeybees forage vigorously for the abundant nectar and pollen from the flowers. The pollen is valuable for stimulating brood rearing and is important for strengthening the colonies. A good yield of honey is produced when many trees are available. Recommended for planting.

FURTHER READING: Beentje, 1994; Fichtl and Adi, 1994; Kokwaro, 1993; Noad and Birnie, 1989; Palgrave and Palgrave, 2002.

