

***Boswellia neglecta* (*B. hildebrandtii*)**

Burseraceae

Indigenous

COMMON NAMES: **Boran:** Dakkar, Dakkar gurate, Hancha dakkara (resin), Hancha lubadin (incense); **Daasanach:** Dong'od nee dhieroka, Hancha dakkara (gum); **English:** Frankincense; **Gabra:** Dakkara; **Kamba:** Kinondo; **Orma:** Dakar; **Rendille:** Halale, Hanja (resin); **Samburu:** Lecholoo, Lkinoo; **Somali:** Magafur, Mathafur, Murfur aad, Mirafur (Tana River); **Swahili:** Ubani; **Taita:** Mtungu; **Turkana:** Ekinyaate.

DESCRIPTION: A much-branched shrub or, less often, a tree to 5 m high, often with **horizontal branches from near the base**. **BARK:** Dark grey, rough and **peeling off in patches, secreting a fragrant resin**. **LEAVES:** Compound, borne **in tufts on small side shoots**, to 11 cm long, leaflets 8–20 pairs. **FLOWERS:** Small, white or greenish white, in loose heads to 4 cm long. **FRUIT:** Red **triangular capsules**.

ECOLOGY: Found in northern and eastern Uganda, northern Tanzania, eastern Ethiopia, Somalia, and in most drier parts of Kenya, e.g. in southern Turkana, Mutha (Kitui), northern Baringo, Meru and Tsavo National Parks, Kora National Reserve and between Voi and Buchuma along the Voi–Mombasa road, in *Acacia–Commiphora* bushland chiefly in rocky, gravelly, shallow and well-drained soils, 200–1,350 m. Rainfall: 250–600 mm. May be locally dominant. Agroclimatic Zones VI–VII.

USES: Firewood, furniture (stools), carvings, drink (tea made from bark), chewing gum, medicine (bark), fodder (leaves browsed by goats and camels), resin (as wood preservative and incense), tannin, dye (bark), toothbrushes, insect repellent.

PROPAGATION: Large cuttings or seedlings.

MANAGEMENT: Coppicing. Natural regeneration of this species is often minimal.

REMARKS: Bark used for making tea (Pokot, Turkana). Bark decoction added to milk and given to children as tonic (Somali, Pokot). Dried ground bark put on wounds (Somali). Plant used in tanning (Rendille). Resin burned for its aroma (as frankincense; Somali), during prayers (*hancha-lubadin*, Boran, Rendille, Somali) and to repel mosquitoes (Somali). Resin sold as frankincense—the most common source of frankincense in Kenya. True

frankincense is resin of a more superior quality yielded by *B. carteri* and *B. frereana*, both occurring in northern Somalia. Three other species of *Boswellia* occur in Kenya: *B. papyrifera* found in Turkana District at the Sudan–Uganda border, *B. rivae* found in Mandera and *B. microphylla*. Resin from several species is exploited commercially.

FURTHER READING: Beentje, 1994; Maundu et al., 1999.

