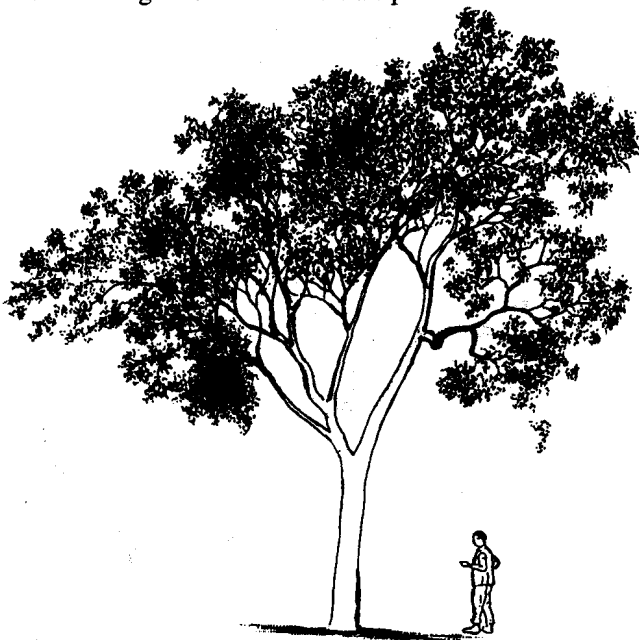


Brachystegia spiciformis**Indigenous****STANDARD/TRADE NAME:** Mrihi.**COMMON NAMES:** Digo: Mrihi; English: *Brachystegia*;
Giriama: Mrihi, Mjombo; Sanya: Soso; Swahili: Mrihi, Myombo.**DESCRIPTION:** A deciduous tree, 8–25 m. Old trees have a rather flat crown, the main trunk producing large branches growing up and out, often twisting. **BARK:** Smooth grey, later rough and flaking. **LEAVES:** Dark green, shiny and pendulous when mature, pink to scarlet when young. Few pairs of leaflets, usually 3–5. Leaflets unequal-sided, increasing in size towards the end of the leaf. Tip round or notched. **FLOWERS:** Sweet scented in short dense spikes to 6 cm, often hanging down, greenish. **FRUIT:** Flat, yellowish to dark brown pods, usually to 9 cm long, occasionally to 14 cm, splitting open explosively to scatter seeds.**ECOLOGY:** One of the 20 or so species of *Brachystegia* that comprise the deciduous miombo woodland of eastern and southern Africa (Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, Tanzania, Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe). Its northern limit is in Kenya, where it is limited to the coastal area and seen as a dominant tree in deciduous woodlands and dry forests of Kwale, Kilifi and Malindi, e.g. Arabuko-Sokoke, Shimba Hills and Jilore Forest. Tolerates a wide range of soils, but common on coastal sandy soils, especially in areas with deep red sand, 0–350 m. Agroclimatic Zones III–IV.**USES:** Firewood, charcoal, timber, door frames, canoes, furniture, poles, medicine, fodder, shade, nitrogen-fixing, tannin.**PROPAGATION:** Seedlings, direct sowing at site.**SEED:** After collection, pods are dried in the sun until they split and release the seeds; 2,500–3,000 seeds per kg. Under ideal conditions germination may reach 80% in 21–30 days with good seed. Seeds are best sown at site since seedlings are difficult to transplant.**Fabaceae (Caesalpinaceae)****treatment:** Not necessary, but germination is improved if the seed coat is nicked.**storage:** Seed can be stored for long periods.**MANAGEMENT:** Slow growing at first; pruning. May need inoculation with soil from below mature trees to grow well. Keeping seedlings in pots for too long results in retarded growth. Timing is crucial so that seedlings are of the right size at the planting season.**REMARKS:** Wood with interlocked grain, difficult to season. All *Brachystegia* spp. have very attractive pink-red young leaves.**FURTHER READING:** <http://www.worldagroforestrycentre.org/Sites/TreeDBS/AFT/AFT.htm>; Albrecht, 1993; Beentje, 1994; Mbuya et al., 1994; Palgrave and Palgrave, 2002; Storrs, 1979.