

## Catha edulis

*Celastraceae*

Indigenous

Common names: Eng: khat, miraa; Fipa: takana; Goro: wahawi; Hehe: muhulo; Ifaqw: lagmeri, walfi; Maasai: ol meraa; Mate: mkalanga; Rangi: morungi; Samb: mwandama; Swah: mrungi.

Ecology: Grows in highland evergreen dry forests. In Tanzania it is common in Usambara, Mbulu, Rungwe, Kilimanjaro and Iringa. It is also found in Kenya, Ethiopia, Malawi, Zambia and South Africa, 1,400-2,200 m.

Uses: Firewood, timber, poles, tool handles, utensils (pestles and mortars), medicine (fresh leaves), stimulant (stalked leaves, shoots).

Description: Evergreen shrub or tree up to 18 m high with a compact crown, but stunted to 2-7 m if regularly harvested. BARK grey and smooth when young, becoming dark brown and flaking at maturity. LEAVES: simple, opposite, 5-11 cm long, shiny green above and paler beneath, edge irregularly toothed; leaf stalks reddish, about 1 cm. FLOWERS: very small, pale green to yellow. Produced in small clusters up to 2 cm in diameter. FRUIT: three-lobed woody capsules about 1 cm long, reddish brown when mature, containing many small winged seeds.

Propagation: Seedlings and suckers or root cuttings.

Seed info.: No. of seeds per kg: 60,000-80,000. Small, narrow and winged. Germination is good, completed after two weeks.

treatment:

storage:

Management: Fairly fast growing; coppicing, pollarding, pruning.

Remarks: A threatened species in Tanzania due to over-exploitation so it is also a reserved tree. Said to indicate soil fertility in areas where it is found. The leaves are chewed both as a stimulant and to treat asthma, coughs, stomach ache and chest pains.

