

***Combretum schumannii***

Combretaceae

**Indigenous**

**COMMON NAMES:** **Boni:** Mugurure; **Digo:** Mgongolo; **Giriama:** Mugurure; **Samburu:** Mumnyani, Muranyani; **Sanya:** Murgulule; **Swahili:** Mgongolo, Mpera mwitu, Mgurure.

**DESCRIPTION:** The largest *Combretum* in Kenya, this is a tall tree, to 20 m, leaves dense, drooping, crown narrow. Trunk often fluted at the base. **BARK:** Smooth, pale brown, with large patchy scales. **LEAVES:** Shiny pale green, thin and wavy, opposite, on thin stalks, clear midrib below, tip pointed. **FLOWERS:** Pale yellow and fragrant, in small, almost round heads. **FRUIT:** Very many hanging on the tree, yellow-green, then pale brown, 4 wings, about 4 cm long, sticky when young.

**ECOLOGY:** Found also in Tanzania and south to Malawi and Mozambique. In Kenya, it is an important tree in the coastal areas, distributed from coastal dry or wet forest (Gede, Jadini) to dry forest and wooded or bushed grassland further inland (Kitui, Makueni), 0–1,200 m. Riverine in dry areas. Agroclimatic Zones III–V. Seed collected at the coast in November.

**USES:** Firewood, charcoal, timber (construction, black heartwood), furniture, posts, tool handles, carvings, medicine (root for treating stomach-ache), bee forage, mulch.

**PROPAGATION:** Seedlings. Sow seeds in pots. Produces root suckers.

**SEED:** Open fruit to get seed.

**treatment:** Not necessary.

**storage:** Best to use fresh seed. The fruit can be stored for some weeks, but sow immediately after extracting the seed.

**MANAGEMENT:** Slow growing, lopping, coppicing.

**REMARKS:** The very durable black heartwood is termite resistant and used a great deal at the coast for carving. This use has reduced the number of large trees significantly.

**FURTHER READING:** Beentje, 1994; Mbuya et al., 1994; Noad and Birnie, 1989.

