

***Commiphora eminii* subsp. *zimmermannii* (*C. zimmermannii*)**

Burseraceae

Indigenous

COMMON NAMES: **Kamba:** Kiliva; **Kikuyu:** Mukungugu, Mutongoga; **Maasai:** Olripande; **Meru:** Mutungugu, Mutunguu; **Swahili:** Mnyakwaa.

DESCRIPTION: A shady tree 5–18 m, bole fluted. **BARK:** Smooth and grey. **LEAVES:** Leathery, light green, compound. Leaflets usually 5–7, pointed, edge finely toothed, veins prominent below, 6–9 cm long, the terminal leaflet is about the same size as the other ones. **FLOWERS:** Small, green-yellow. **FRUIT:** Flattened, round on a 1-cm long stalk.

ECOLOGY: The species is found only in eastern Africa and north-eastern Zambia. In Kenya, distributed from the coastal hill forests to Central Province, but now rare. Found in dry evergreen forests and bushland, but also planted in farmland, 0–1,750 m; rainfall 600–1,000 mm. Agroclimatic Zones II–IV.

USES: Firewood, timber, furniture, utensils (bowls), medicine (roots, leaves, bark), fodder (emergency), shade, soil conservation (gully control), live fence, boundary marking, yam support.

PROPAGATION: Large cuttings.

SEED: Propagated only by cuttings.

MANAGEMENT: Fairly fast growing, pollarding.

REMARKS: The tree has no adverse effect on food crops due to its small root system and canopy. Traditionally used by the Kikuyu as a quick-growing hedge and as support for yams. It grows fast at the coast. The wood is easy to work. Becoming rare in the wild but planted around homesteads and in farmland. Subsp. *trifoliolata* usually has larger leaves with leaflets in 3s and rarely in 5s. It is found on a few hills in the Voi area.

FURTHER READING: Beentje, 1994; Kokwaro, 1993; Maundu et al., 1999; Mbuya et al., 1994; Noad and Birnie, 1989.

