

Conocarpus lancifolius

Combretaceae

Somalia

COMMON NAMES: Somali: Damaas.

DESCRIPTION: An evergreen shady tree, to 20 m, with upward spreading branches, short bole and **dense, fresh green foliage**. **BARK:** Grey-brown, fissured. **LEAVES:** Smooth and shiny, to 10 cm, narrowing towards the base, in dense spirals. **FLOWERS:** Yellow-green, in **round heads** on branched stalks, slightly fragrant. **FRUIT:** In **dry, round, greenish heads, cone-like**, containing tiny, scale-like hard seeds.

ECOLOGY: A tall tree found naturally only in Somalia. Often dominant in dry river valleys (wadis) and along the Indian Ocean coast. It is now cultivated, as it is one of the fastest growing trees in dry areas, 0–1,000 m. It tolerates sandy, saline and coral soils. It grows well in Malindi and Lamu. Agroclimatic Zones V–VI.

USES: Firewood, charcoal, timber, poles, posts, carvings, boat building, fodder (leaves and shoots), bee forage, shade, ornamental, mulch, soil conservation, river-bank stabilization, windbreak.

PROPAGATION: Seedlings.

SEED: Seeds are very small and difficult to extract; 400,000–1,700,000 seeds per kg.

treatment: Seeds are difficult to germinate. They should be floated in a small sloping tray with soil at one end. The seeds will germinate and lodge in the soil. This method is used at Baobab Farm, Likoni, Mombasa.

storage: Seeds do not store. Fresh seed should be used.

MANAGEMENT: Very fast growing; can be coppiced and pollarded.

REMARKS: The tree is planted in Sudan for reforestation, shelter and green belts. It is a promising agroforestry tree for dry lowland sites. The wood is light coloured and medium heavy.

FURTHER READING: Bein et al., 1996; Mbuya et al., 1994; National Academy of Sciences, 1983; Noad and Birnie, 1989.

