

***Cordia africana* (*C. abyssinica*)****Boraginaceae****Indigenous**

**COMMON NAMES:** **Boran:** Waddessa, Wandesi; **Embu:** Muringa; **Kamba:** Muvutu; **Kikuyu:** Muringa; **Kisii:** Omokobokobo; **Luhya (Bukusu):** Kumukikhili, Kumukomari; **Luhya:** Mukomari, Mukamari; **Meru:** Muringa; **Nandi:** Samutet; **Sabaot:** Mugunguret; **Samburu:** Chibulukwa, Lboringo; **Swahili:** Mkobokobo; **Taita:** Mringaringa; **Taveta:** Muringaringa; **Tugen:** Samut.

**DESCRIPTION:** A much-branched deciduous tree with rounded crown and often-crooked trunk, 4–15 m. **BARK:** Pale brown, finely grooved, rough with age. **LEAVES:** Large, oval, to 16 cm, base rounded, veins prominent below, young shoots, leaf stalks, underside of leaves covered with soft brown hairs, the upper surface may be slightly sandpapery. **FLOWERS:** Showy, funnel shaped, 2.5 cm across, thin white petals, sweetly scented and attractive to bees; the calyx cup hairy brown and strongly ribbed. **FRUIT:** Yellow-orange, 1 cm in hairy calyx cups. Sticky edible pulp, each fruit with a single stone containing 4–6 seeds.

**ECOLOGY:** From Guinea in West Africa east to Ethiopia to South Africa; also in the Arabian peninsula. A large deciduous forest tree of moist warm areas, woodland and bush. It is widespread in Kenya, where it is common in pasture land between 1,200 and 2,000 m, mainly in Central Province, around Nairobi, in Meru, Marsabit, Kakamega, Kisii Districts and in parts of Rift Valley Province. Tends to be riverine in drier areas. Agroclimatic Zones II–III. Flowering periods very varied. Usually flowering in May–August and seeds in September–November.

**USES:** Firewood, timber, furniture, beehives, utensils (mortars), edible fruit, medicine (bark, roots), fodder (dry season), bee forage, shade, ornamental, mulch, soil conservation, fibres, glue, boundary marking.

**PROPAGATION:** Seedlings, wildings.

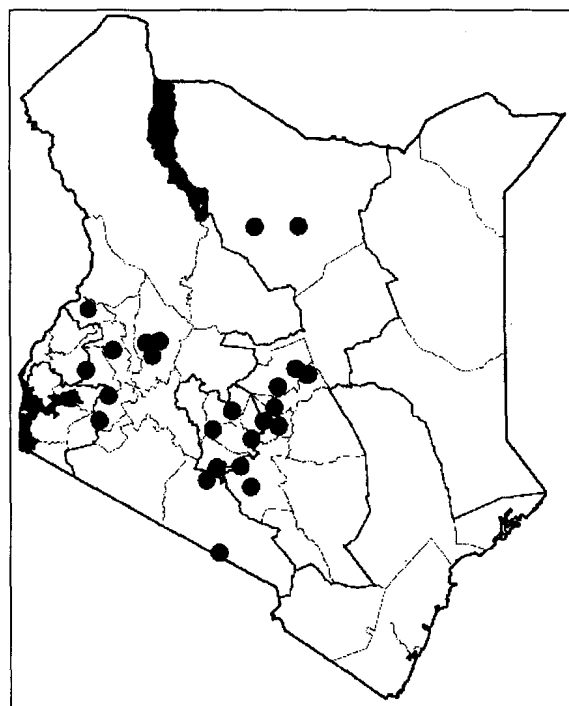
**SEED:** Germination rate 50–80% in 40–60 days, slow and uneven germination. The fruits should be de-pulped immediately after collection by rubbing over a wire mesh under flowing water.

Sand can be added to facilitate the process. Pulp and stones can then be separated by floating in water; 2,500–4,500 stones per kg, each stone containing several seeds (multi-germ).

**treatment:** Not necessary.

**storage:** De-pulped fruit can be stored for some time.

**MANAGEMENT:** Moderate to slow growing; pollarding, lopping, coppicing. Several seedlings may germinate from each stone. Can be pricked out. Young trees grow best under some shade. Tend to branch a lot if grown in full light.



## *Cordia africana* (cont)

**REMARKS:** The heartwood is hard and takes a good polish, so the timber is prized for furniture, but it can be twisted and difficult to saw. Often found in cropland where it is managed to reduce shade. Provides very good mulch.

**FURTHER READING:** <http://www.worldagroforestrycentre.org/Sites/TreeDBS/AFT/AFT.htm>; Albrecht, 1993; Backes and Ahenda, 1998; Beentje, 1994; Bein et al., 1996; Bekele-Tesemma et al., 1993; Blundell, 1987; Dharani, 2002; Fichtl and Adi, 1994; Katende et al., 1995; Kokwaro, 1993; Mbuya et al., 1994; Noad and Birnie, 1989; Palgrave and Palgrave, 2002.

