

Cordia monoica* (C. ovalis)*Boraginaceae****Indigenous**

COMMON NAMES: **Boran:** Qotte; **English:** Sandpaper tree; **Ilchamus:** Lmuleel, Lsek, Lseki, Muleelin; **Kamba:** Kithei, Muthei, Nthei (fruit); **Kikuyu:** Mukuo, Mukuu, Muthigi; **Kipsigis:** Nogirwet; **Luhya** (Bukusu): Kumukhendie; **Luo:** Oseno; **Maasai:** Eseki, Isek (plural), Ilseki (plural), Olseki, Oseki; **Meru:** Ikuo, Mukuo; **Orma:** Araba; **Pokot:** Toporewo; **Samburu:** Lamantume, Seeki; **Somali:** Marer gob, Marer girgir (Tana River); **Swahili:** Msasa; **Tharaka:** Muthugagu, Mutugangu; **Turkana:** Elkaisekiseki, Entuntun; **Wardei:** Dheeka.

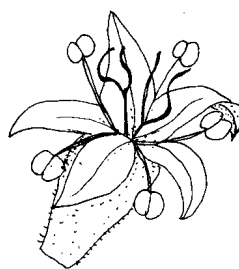
DESCRIPTION: A multi-stemmed shrub or tree to 6 m, occasionally reaching 12 m. **BARK:** **Blue-grey, thin and fibrous, peeling in strips**—resembling eucalyptus. **LEAVES:** Broadly oval to almost round, 5–8 cm, margin slightly toothed, **upper surface like sandpaper to touch** but softly hairy below with prominent veins; a stalk to 2 cm. **Branchlets, leaf and flower stalks densely covered with rusty hairs.** **FLOWERS:** Pale yellow, sharply fragrant, in dense terminal clusters, each flower tubular, about 1 cm across, calyx hairy and persistent. **FRUIT:** Oval, pointed, yellow-orange and soft when ripe, about 2 cm long, held in a **hairy cup-like calyx that loosely covers 1/3 of the fruit**; the single stone lies in jelly-like edible pulp.

ECOLOGY: This *Cordia* species grows from Ethiopia and Sudan south to South Africa. Also occurs in India and Sri Lanka. It is widely distributed in Kenya and found in many habitats from wet or riverine forest to woodland and bush with *Acacia-Euphorbia* or grassland. Often found in semi-evergreen or deciduous bushland or bushed grassland, on rocks or along rivers. Agroclimatic Zones II–IV. Flowers in March–April and October and seeds in July–August and December in Bungoma.

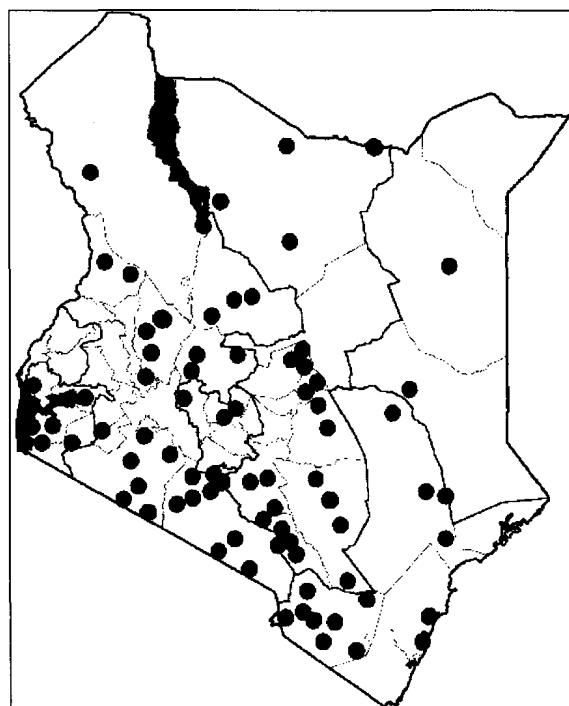
USES: Firewood, charcoal, timber (construction), poles, beehives (bark), tool handles, carvings, utensils (clubs, hooked sticks for hanging traditional beehives, pestles), walking sticks, bows, arrow shafts, edible fruit, medicine (leaves, roots, stem bark), fodder (leaves for camels and goats), bee forage, shade, fibre (bark), fence droppers, ceremonial, veterinary medicine, 'sandpaper' (leaves).

PROPAGATION: Seedlings, wildings.

SEED: The fruits should be de-pulped immediately after collection by rubbing over a wire mesh under running water. Sand can be added to facilitate the process. Pulp and stones can then be separated by floating in water. About 3,500 stones per kg; each fruit contains a few seeds (multi-germ).



Enlarged flower



***Cordia monoica* (cont)**

treatment: None, or soak in cold water for 6 hours.

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

MANAGEMENT: Slow growing; coppicing, lopping, pollarding. Several seedlings may germinate from each stone. Can be pricked out.

REMARKS: Survives well in dry areas. A leaf extract can be used to remove a retained placenta (used for both humans and livestock). The pulp of the fruit is edible. The fruit coat is usually removed, the pulp with the seed is sucked and the seeds discarded. The tree is associated with traditional beliefs in many communities in Kenya.

FURTHER READING: Backes and Ahenda, 1998; Beentje, 1994; Bein et al., 1996; Katende et al., 1995; Kokwaro, 1993; Maundu et al., 1999; Mbuya et al., 1994; Ruffo et al., 2002.