

Dobera glabra

Salvadoraceae

Indigenous

COMMON NAMES: **Boni:** Hurub; **Boran:** Garse; **Chonyi:** Mkuha; **Daasanach:** Kadite, Kada (plural); **Giriama:** Mkuha, Mkulukulu, Mukulu; **Kamba:** Kikaiitha, Kisiu; **Kambe:** Mkuha; **Malakote:** Mokopa; **Marakwet:** Koros (plural), Korosion; **Orma:** Gashir; **Pokomo:** Mukupha; **Pokot:** Keresion, Korosion; **Samburu:** Serri; **Sanya:** Garse; **Somali:** Garas, Garso; **Swahili:** Msega, Mswaki, Mkupa; **Tharaka:** Mungaritha; **Turkana:** Edapal; **Wardei:** Garas weyna.

DESCRIPTION: An evergreen tree, usually 4–7 m high with rounded or spreading low crown. **BARK:** Dark grey, almost black, **patchy, smooth or nearly so with reticulation giving it a false rough appearance.** **LEAVES:** Opposite, simple, entire, dark green or grey-green, **ovate to almost round, with a fleshy appearance, tip usually notched, veins hardly seen.** **FLOWERS:** Greenish white, fragrant, in branched heads. **FRUIT:** Green, wrinkled, turning yellow-orange when ripe, **egg-shaped, to 2 cm, with 1–2 flat seeds in soft edible pulp.**

ECOLOGY: Distributed in north-east Africa south to Uganda and Kenya and also in India. In Kenya, common at the coast, Kitui, along the lower Tana River valley, and northern areas. Occurs in dry bushland, often near watercourses and places with high groundwater in rocky or sandy soils, less often on clay soils; 20–1,100 m. Tolerates salinity but not waterlogging. Also on rocky hillsides. It is very common around lugga flood plains. Agroclimatic Zones IV (coast)–VII. Fruits in April–May around Tana River.

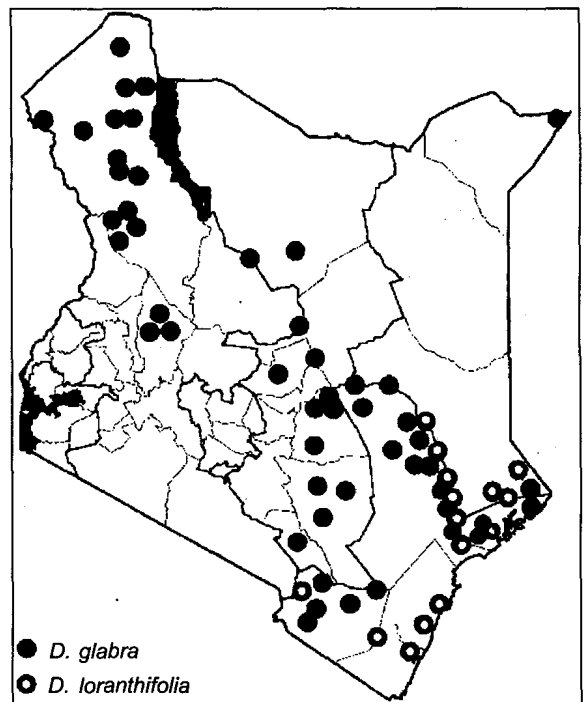
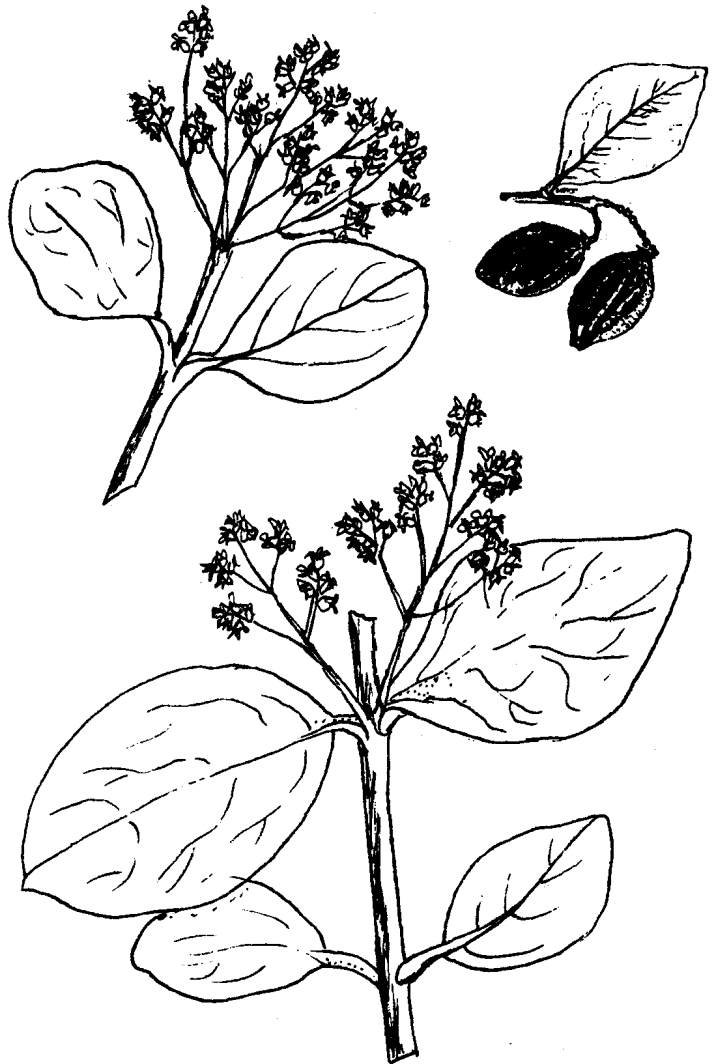
USES: Firewood, timber (small dimension for house construction), utensils (containers, mortars, water troughs), edible fruit, seed and gum, medicine, fodder (leaves for camels and goats), toothbrushes, veterinary medicine, shade, ceremonial.

PROPAGATION: Direct sowing at site, wildings, seedlings (sow in pots).

SEED: About 1,300–1,400 seeds per kg. Germination 60–80% within 40–60 days with fresh and carefully extracted seed.

treatment: Not necessary.

storage: Seed does not store well (recalcitrant). Use fresh seed.



Dobera glabra (cont)

MANAGEMENT: Slow growing but very hardy once established; lopping, coppicing.

REMARKS: The fruit and seeds are a very important food during hunger periods in dry areas of northern Kenya and southern parts of Sudan and Ethiopia. Fruit pulp eaten raw. Seeds (cotyledons) eaten after being cooked for 3–4 hours during which water is replaced 4–6 times (Pokot, Turkana, Tugen, Marakwet, Daasanach). Gum from the tree is eaten in Mandera (Somali). Ash used to treat camel mange. Wood used to make mortars (Giriama, Pokomo, Somali), watering troughs (*taker*: Pokot), containers (Mandera). It is, however, soft. A ceremonial tree and meeting place (Pokot, Baringo). *D. loranthifolia* is a very similar species distributed in south-eastern Kenya (**Chonyi:** Mkuha; **Giriama:** Mkuha; **Kamba:** Kisiu; **Orma:** Dende; **Pokomo:** Mkupha; **Swahili:** Msega,

Mswaki; **Wardei:** Garas winlah). *D. loranthifolia* is a medium-sized tree with a rather spreading crown, which is usually lighter than in *D. glabra*. Leaves grey-green (lighter than in *D. glabra*) and leathery. The bark is grey (lighter than in *D. glabra*), corky, longitudinally fissured, flaking off in small patches but generally smooth. Fruits are oval, pinkish yellow to yellow-green on ripening and generally larger and sweeter than in *D. glabra*. The other uses are more or less the same. *D. loranthifolia* is found in southern Somalia through Kenya and Tanzania to Mozambique; 0–800 m.

FURTHER READING: <http://www.worldagroforestrycentre.org/Sites/TreeDBS/AFT/AFT.htm>; Albrecht, 1993; Beentje, 1994; Bein et al., 1996; Bekele-Tesemma et al. 1993; ITDG and IIRR, 1996; Maundu et al., 1999.



D. loranthifolia