

Indigenous

**Common names:** **English:** Forest dombeya **Lugishu:** Gabaluwa, chikole **Rukiga:** Mukole **Sebei:** Borowa, borowetomoi.

**Ecology:** A common understorey tree of highland forests in East Africa and Ethiopia. In Uganda it is associated with *Hagenia*, *Cassipourea* and *Afrocrania* on Mt. Elgon and other mountains.

**Uses:** Firewood, charcoal, timber, poles, tool handles, bows, medicine (bark and roots), ropes (bark fibres), bee-forage, mulch, soil conservation and improvement (nursery soil collection).

**Description:** A deciduous shrub or **much-branched tree, 12-15 m, with a shady umbrella crown** and a trunk diameter about 50 cm. **BARK:** **Grey and smooth**, only lightly grooved with age; clear breathing pores (lenticels); inner bark thick, orange-brown, very fibrous. **LEAVES:** Large, hairy and **heart-shaped**, the **leaf bases overlapping**, to 30 cm long, **tip pointed**, edge sharply toothed, **vein network very clear below** with 5 or more veins radiating from the centre. **Young stems and leaf stalks often red.** **FLOWERS:** Often abundant, **pale pink or white with red centres**, full of nectar, in showy clusters on **branched hairy stalks to 30 cm**, 5 petals one-sided, red-purple in centre; many stamens with orange anthers; **5 pink stigma.** **FRUIT:** Petals turn yellow-brown and surround the fruit capsule, **oval, densely hairy** with about 10 brown seeds inside.

**Propagation:** Seedlings, wildings.

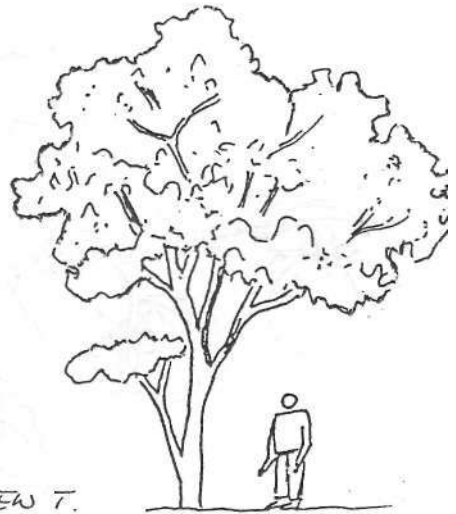
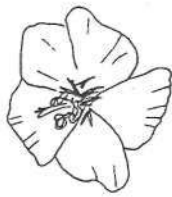
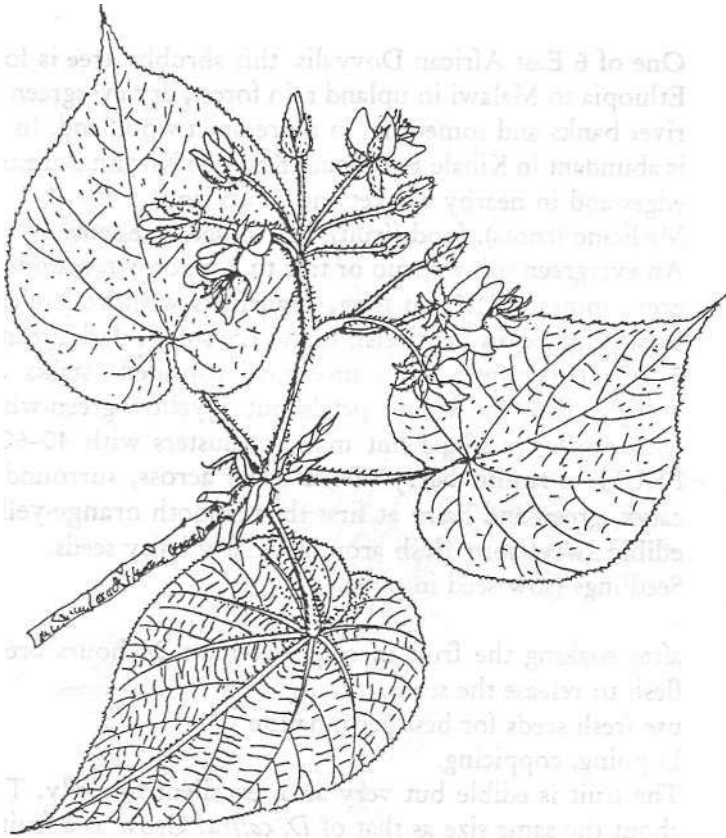
**Seed:** No. of seeds per kg: about 235,000.

**treatment:** not necessary,

**storage:** seed can be stored.

**Management:** Fairly fast growing.

**Remarks:** Even though top-quality forest soil can be collected below these trees, crops cannot grow well due to the heavy shading. The wood is soft but tough, easy to saw and to plane. The species has been recommended for planting together with others in the buffer zone around Bwindi National Park. The largest specimens are found on Mt. Elgon. It is considered one of the best nectar-producing trees.



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