

*Dovyalis abyssinica*

## Flacourtiaceae

## Indigenous

**COMMON NAMES:** **Boran:** Kurrawa; **Chonyi:** Dungatundu (fruit), Mdungatundu; **Giriama:** Mdungatundu, Dungatundu; **Kamba:** Mukambua, Ngambua (fruit); **Kikuyu:** Mukambura, Ngambura (fruit); **Kipsigis:** Mukiat, Mwokiot; **Kisii:** Omokorogoinwa, Omokorogunya; **Luo:** Akudho, Songola; **Maasai:** Olmorogi, Ilmorok (plural); **Marakwet:** Bapchebili, Bapchebilil, Mendililwo; **Mbeere:** Muraga; **Meru:** Muro; **Nandi:** Nakuk, Nokok; **Pokot:** Karaturwa, Mintirilwo; **Sabaot:** Mundililwet; **Samburu:** Imoroo, Limoro; **Sanya:** Mkidonyathi; **Somali:** Koshum; **Taita:** Mbuche.

**DESCRIPTION:** A spiny evergreen shrub or tree to 5 m, crown rounded. **BARK:** Grey, spines to 1.5 cm long. Branchlets with **very clear dotted breathing pores (lenticels)**. **LEAVES:** Shiny, dark green, oval, to 5 cm, tip blunt, edge unevenly rounded, stalks and veins reddish. **FLOWERS:** No petals but 5 yellow–green–white sepals, female flowers single, but male in clusters with 40–60 stamens. **FRUIT:** A round berry about 2 cm across, surrounded by the calyx, green and hairy at first then smooth orange-yellow pulp, with edible sweet-sour flesh around the few hairy seeds.

**ECOLOGY:** This shrubby tree is found from Ethiopia, Somalia and Socotra south to Malawi in upland rainforest, dry evergreen forest, on river banks and sometimes in more open woodland. In Kenya on Mt Kulal, Nyambene Hills, Taita Hills, the central highlands, Loita Hills, highlands in Rift Valley Province, at forest edges, 0–2,700 m. Common on red soils. Sometimes found as a remnant tree or shrub in coffee plantations. Agroclimatic Zones II–III.

**USES:** Edible fruit (eaten raw), soup (roots and stem), jam, flavouring (added to porridge), medicine (roots), fodder (leaves eaten by goats and sheep), bee forage, live fence, spines used for piercing ears.

**PROPAGATION:** Seedlings (sow in seedbed and prick out).

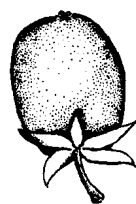
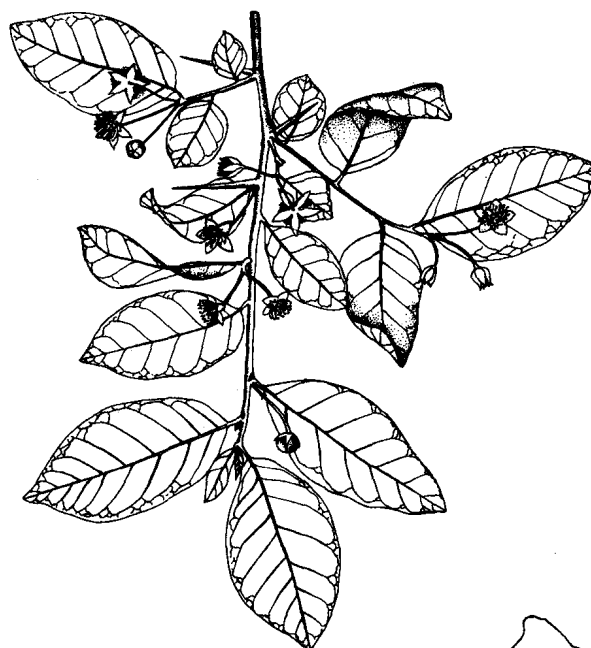
**treatment:** After collection the fruit are soaked in water for 2–3 days. The water is then drained off and the fruit squeezed by hand to separate the seeds from the pulp. After washing with water the seeds can be dried and stored, but not for long.

**storage:** Use fresh seeds for best germination.

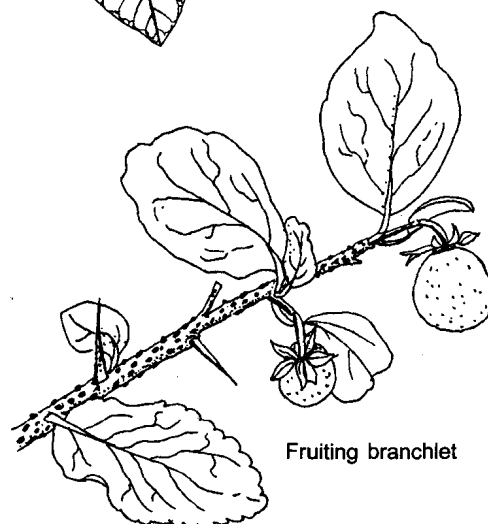
**MANAGEMENT:** Lopping, coppicing.

**REMARKS:** The fruit is edible but very acid; excellent for jelly. It is about the same size as that of *D. caffra*. Grown as a fruit bush. Roots are widely used as medicine. At least 4 indigenous species of *Dovyalis* are found in Kenya. Most have edible fruit and have great potential as hedge plants.

**FURTHER READING:** Beentje, 1994; Bein et al., 1996; Bekele-Tesemma et al., 1993; Dharani, 2002; Katende et al., 1995; Kokwaro, 1993; Maundu et al., 1999; Noad and Birnie, 1989; Ruffo et al., 2002.



Fruit



Fruiting branchlet

