

Dovyalis caffra

Flacourtiaceae

South Africa

- Common names: Eng: kei apple.
- Ecology: A spiny shrub found in open bush and Acada woodlands in southern Africa, now widely planted in tropical and subtropical areas as an effective fruiting hedge that is almost goat proof. It does well above 1,200 m. Prefers deep well-drained soils, tolerates loamy clay and is drought resistant once established. In Tanzania it is widely planted in the northern regions (Kilimanjaro and Arusha) as a live fence.
- Uses: Fruit (jam), ornamental, bee forage, live fence.
- Description: A thorny evergreen shrub, usually 3-5 m. BARK: with strong spines to 6 cm. LEAVES: thin, shiny dark green to 5 cm, tip rounded or notched. FLOWERS: male and female flowers on different plants, male flowers cream-yellow in dense clusters, many stamens. FRUIT: round, orange-yellow, to 4 cm, soft sweet flesh, up to 20 seeds within.
- Propagation: Seedlings, direct sowing.
- Seed info.: No. of seeds per kg: 27,000-47,000; 50 kg of fruits yield 1 kg of seed,
- treatment: not necessary.
- storage: seed does not store. Sow fresh seed for best germination results. Germination in 18-20 days.
- Management: Fast growing once established, initially slow. Trim regularly to maintain a good live fence.
- Remarks: In the northern regions of Tanzania, seedlings of *Dovyalis caffra* are now grown by farmers for sale as there is a big local demand for seedlings for live fencing. If fruit are soaked in water and allowed to ferment the liquid drained off has herbicidal properties (i.e. it can be used as a weed killer).

