

Embelia schimperi

Myrsinaceae

Indigenous

COMMON NAMES: **Kikuyu:** Matindia ariithi; **Kipsigis:** Kibugonit, Chackweet; **Maasai:** Olsani onyukie.

DESCRIPTION: Usually a tree to 5 m, but often a shrubby climber. **BARK:** Smooth red-brown. **Twigs without hairs** but with raised pale dots, the breathing pores (lenticels). **LEAVES:** Shiny and dark green above, more pale beneath, sometimes red, oval, wide or narrow to **8 cm x 4 cm, tip rounded**, narrowing to the base, a red midrib and stalk to 2 cm. The midrib and **15 or more side veins** are raised below. **FLOWERS:** Green–white–cream and tiny, on a hairy stalk from the leaf axil. **FRUIT:** Very many on stalks, each rounded, 6 mm across, red when ripe, tipped by the old style, one seed inside.

ECOLOGY: Widespread in West Africa from Nigeria and Cameroon, east to Sudan and south to Angola, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi. In Kenya found around Nairobi westwards as an understorey tree in humid highland evergreen forest; 1,000–2,600 m, rainfall 1,000–1,900 mm. Thrives in a variety of soils provided there is moisture. Agroclimatic Zones II–III.

USES: Firewood, edible leaves (chewed), medicine (dried, pounded leaves, roots and dry seeds, anthelmintic), fodder (leaves).

PROPAGATION: Seedlings, wildings.

SEED: About 15,000–20,000 seeds per kg.

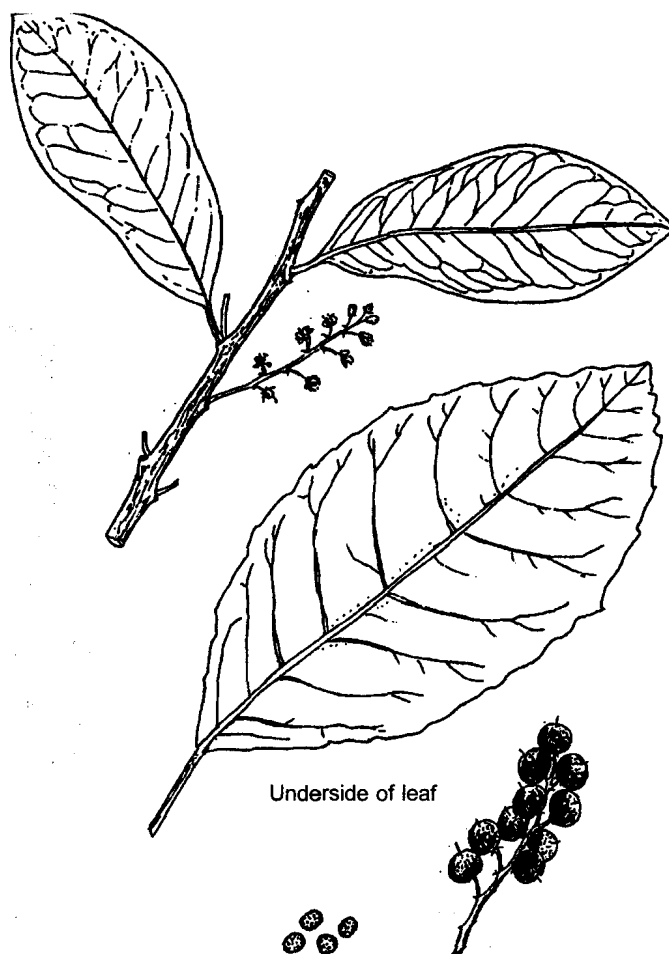
treatment: Not necessary.

storage: Seed can be stored for some time.

MANAGEMENT: The tree should be grown with trees that are light demanding and straight growing to give it the shady environment that it requires.

REMARKS: The leaves are used by the Marakwet as a stimulant. They have a salty taste and are also eaten by cattle herders of other communities.

FURTHER READING: Beentje, 1994; Bekele-Tesemma et al., 1993; Katende et al., 1999; Kokwaro, 1993; Ruffo et al., 2002.



Enlarged flower showing stamens joined to petals

