

***Eriobotrya japonica***

Rosaceae

China, Japan

**COMMON NAMES:** **English:** Loquat; **Kamba:** Kitunda; **Kikuyu:** Minoria, Murungati haru, Muburuti; **Kisii:** Ekeragwati; **Luhya:** Lqogat; **Luo:** Musabibu.

**DESCRIPTION:** A dense evergreen shrub or small tree to 7 m, branching close to the ground. **BARK:** Grey and rough, young stems hairy. **LEAVES:** Stalkless, dark green, shiny above, woolly hairs below, about 35 cm long, the tip pointed and the edge prickly, toothed, young leaves paler, foliage in upward-pointing tufts. **FLOWERS:** Cream-white, scented, in pyramidal heads at the end of branches, each flower 2 cm across, flower buds covered with golden-brown hairs. **FRUIT:** In loose clusters, yellow, egg-shaped, usually 2–7 cm long, acid-sweet flesh around a few large brown-black seeds.

**ECOLOGY:** A small evergreen tree very widely planted in its native China, Japan and northern India, and also in the Mediterranean. Now doing well in the Kenya highlands, 1,500–2,400 m. It is a common tree in Nairobi and Central and Western Provinces. Drought resistant once established, but prefers moderate to heavy rainfall. Agroclimatic Zones II–III.

**USES:** Firewood, charcoal, poles, carvings, food (edible fruit, jam, jelly, syrup), bee forage, shade, ornamental, mulch, windbreak.

**PROPAGATION:** Direct sowing at site, seedlings (sow seed in pots), wildings. Root development is quite fast, so good to sow directly at site. Sow 2–3 cm deep. Grafted trees are available; they make stronger growth, remain smaller but mature and produce fruit faster. Such improved varieties can be multiplied by air layering as well as T-budding and grafting. Healthy loquat seedlings can be used as root-stock.

**SEED:** 400–600 seeds per kg. The seeds should not be dried (recalcitrant). Fresh seeds germinate well and fast.

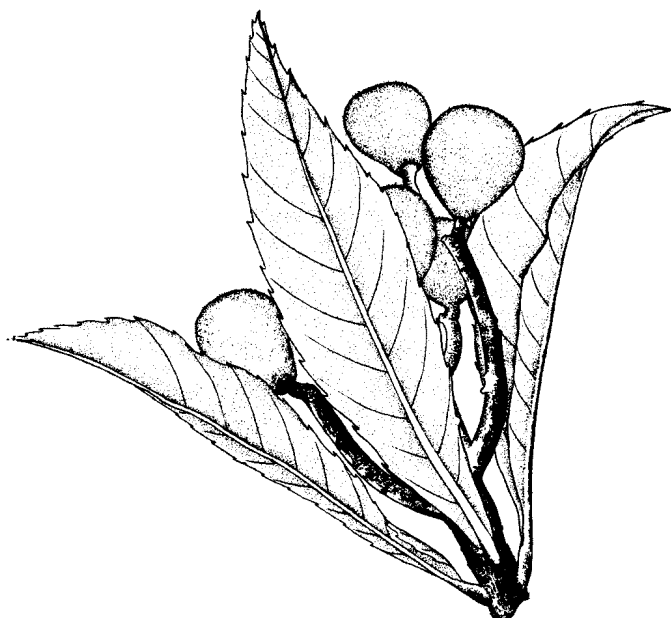
**treatment:** Not necessary.

**storage:** Seed does not store well. Use fresh seed.

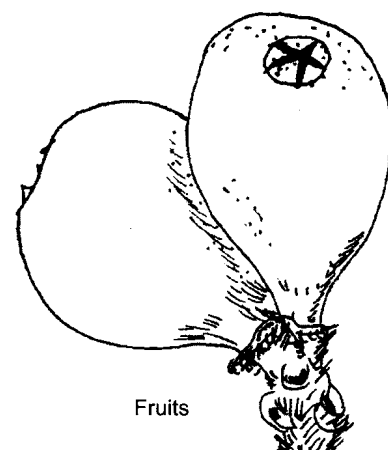
**MANAGEMENT:** Fairly fast growing, pruning.

**REMARKS:** The fruit is juicy with a sweet–acid taste. Seeds should be discarded as they are reportedly poisonous.

**FURTHER READING:** <http://www.worldagroforestrycentre.org/Sites/TreeDBS/AFT/AFT.htm>; Bein et al., 1996; Bekele-Tesemma et al., 1993; Dharani, 2002; Fichtl and Adi, 1994; Katende et al., 1995; Mbuya et al., 1994; Noad and Birnie, 1989; Verheij and Coronel, 1991.



Flowering branch



Fruits

