

Ficus sur* (*F. capensis*)*Moraceae****Indigenous**

COMMON NAMES: **Boran:** Oda, Woda, Od; **Chonyi:** Mukuyu; **Embu:** Mukuyu, Nguyu; **English:** Cape fig; **Ilchamus:** Lnaboli; **Kamba:** Mukuyu; **Kikuyu:** Mukuyu, Nguyu (fruit); **Kipsigis:** Mogoiwet; **Luo:** Ng'owo, Ng'owo matundo, Bongu; **Maasai:** Orng'aboli; **Meru:** Mukuyu, Mukuu, Nguyu (fruit); **Samburu:** Lng'aboli; **Somali:** Bardah, Berde; **Swahili:** Mkyu, Mkuju.

DESCRIPTION: A large deciduous tree to 20 m high with the trunk up to 150 cm in diameter, occasionally buttressed. **BARK:** Smooth, grey to grey-white, darker grey-brown with age. **LEAVES:** Large, **broadly oval**, to 13 x 20 cm, usually smooth, but may be sandpapery; base rounded or slightly heart-shaped, **edge often with widely spaced teeth**, sometimes wavy, veins clear below, stalk grooved and flexible to 8 cm. **FIGS:** In **heavy clusters on leafless branches to 70 cm long arising from trunk or older wood**; figs round, 2–4 cm across, on stalks to 1.5 cm long, orange-red, often hairy, soft, having many seeds and often insects too.

ECOLOGY: A widespread African fig tree occurring in eastern Africa and extending north to Yemen and south to Angola and South Africa. In Kenya, it is widespread from the coast to the western and northern regions. It is mainly riparian being common on flood-prone sites and in groundwater forests. Occasionally found away from such habitats, 0–2,100 m. Agroclimatic Zones II–IV. Figs in April–June in Bungoma.

USES: Firewood, timber (doors), furniture (stools), beehives, carving, utensils (mortars, boxes, containers), boat building (canoes), edible fruit (figs), medicine (roots, bark), fodder, bee forage (fruit juice), shade, ceremonial, glue (latex used for making bird lime).

PROPAGATION: Cuttings, wildings and seedlings.

SEED: Tiny seeds are contained in figs. Slice the fig, dry it in the sun and shake out the seeds.

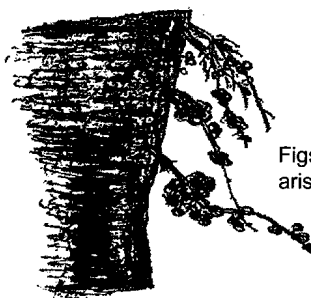
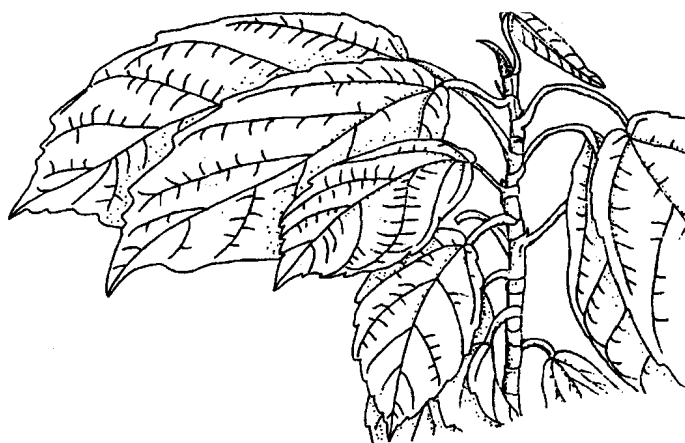
treatment: Not necessary.

storage: Should be sown soon after extraction.

MANAGEMENT: Lopping, pollarding.

REMARKS: The tree is considered moisture trapping, and other moisture-demanding plants are often found regenerating in its shade. It does not compete with agricultural crops. Fruit edible but watery and tasteless. This species is closely related to the sycamore fig (*Ficus sycomorus*) and the local names of both are often similar. It is also widely used as a ceremonial tree.

FURTHER READING: Backes and Ahenda, 1998; Beentje, 1994; Bekele-Tesemma et al., 1993; Dharani, 2002; Fichtl and Adi, 1994; Katende et al., 1995, 1999; Kokwaro, 1993; Maundu et al., 1999; Noad and Birnie, 1989; Ruffo et al., 2002; Sommerlatte and Sommerlatte, 1990; Storrs, 1979; von Maydell, 1990.



Figs on branches arising from trunk

