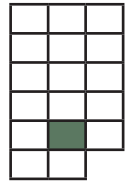


Gardenia volkensii

Rubiaceae



Indigenous

Am: *Gambello*

Eng: *Common gardenia, Transvaal gardenia*

Shn: *Gaba*

Ecology

A common tree in most of tropical Africa, from Ethiopia south to northern Namibia, northern Botswana, Zimbabwe, northern Natal and Swaziland. It occurs in a wide variety of soils, ranging from well-drained sand to poorly drained clayey soil, as well as in rocky areas. In Ethiopia, it grows in Moist Kolla agroclimatic zone, mostly in well-drained soils, 500—1,300 m in Gamo Gofa and Sidamo.

Uses

Carvings, medicine (fruits and roots), ornamental.

Description

A small twiggy tree rarely reaching 8 m with a relatively dense crown and a short thick and often fluted trunk. The twigs are borne in whorls of three and are very hard and stiff. BARK: Pale grey, smooth on young branches. In older parts, flaking in small, fairly thick sections, resulting in a mottled appearance. LEAVES: Spoon-shaped, widest and truncated at the tip and borne in whorls of three, usually less than 5 cm long. FLOWERS: Large, borne singly. Corolla large, showy white, turning yellow after a few days, then brown before dropping, tube up to 10 cm long or more. FRUIT: Large, round or oval, grey with prominent longitudinal ribs, remaining

on the tree for a long time and falling unopened.

Propagation

Can be propagated from cuttings. Raising seedlings and using wildings are other options.

Seed

Seed can remain dormant for a long time.

Treatment: Need to soak fruit in water and macerate when soft.

Storage: can be stored for few months after drying well.

Management

Remark

The showy large flowers of *Gardenia* species make them excellent ornamental plants.

The wood of most species is yellowish, very hard, heavy and fine-grained, but the small size limits its use. An infusion from the fruits and roots is used to stop vomiting.



Photos: Patrick Maundu

