

Grevillea robusta

Proteaceae

Eastern Australia

Eng: *Silky oak*

Ecology: A widely planted and popular exotic all over Africa, this tree grows on fairly well drained and neutral to acidic soils but does not tolerate waterlogging or heavy clays, 1,500-2,700 m. In Eritrea, it has been introduced as an ornamental in Asmara, Mendefera and Sabur.

Uses: **Firewood**, charcoal, poles, **timber** (furniture), fodder (leaves), bee forage, soil conservation, **ornamental, shade**, windbreak.

Description: A semi-deciduous tree to 20 m or more with a straight trunk and angular branches. An oval leafy crown. **BARK:** Dark grey, rough, vertically grooved. **LEAVES:** Compound, **fern-like, very divided**, leathery pale green above, **silver-grey below**. **FLOWERS:** Very many, in **one-sided golden-orange spikes**, much nectar which attracts bees and sunbirds. **FRUIT:** Dark brown capsule, about 1 cm, with a slender beak, splitting to set free 2 winged seeds.

Propagation: Wildings, seedlings.

Seed: The species is a prolific seeder but the seed is difficult to collect. Germination rate 30-90%. No. of seeds per kg: 7,000-110,000.

treatment: Not necessary but can be soaked in cold water for 24 hours.

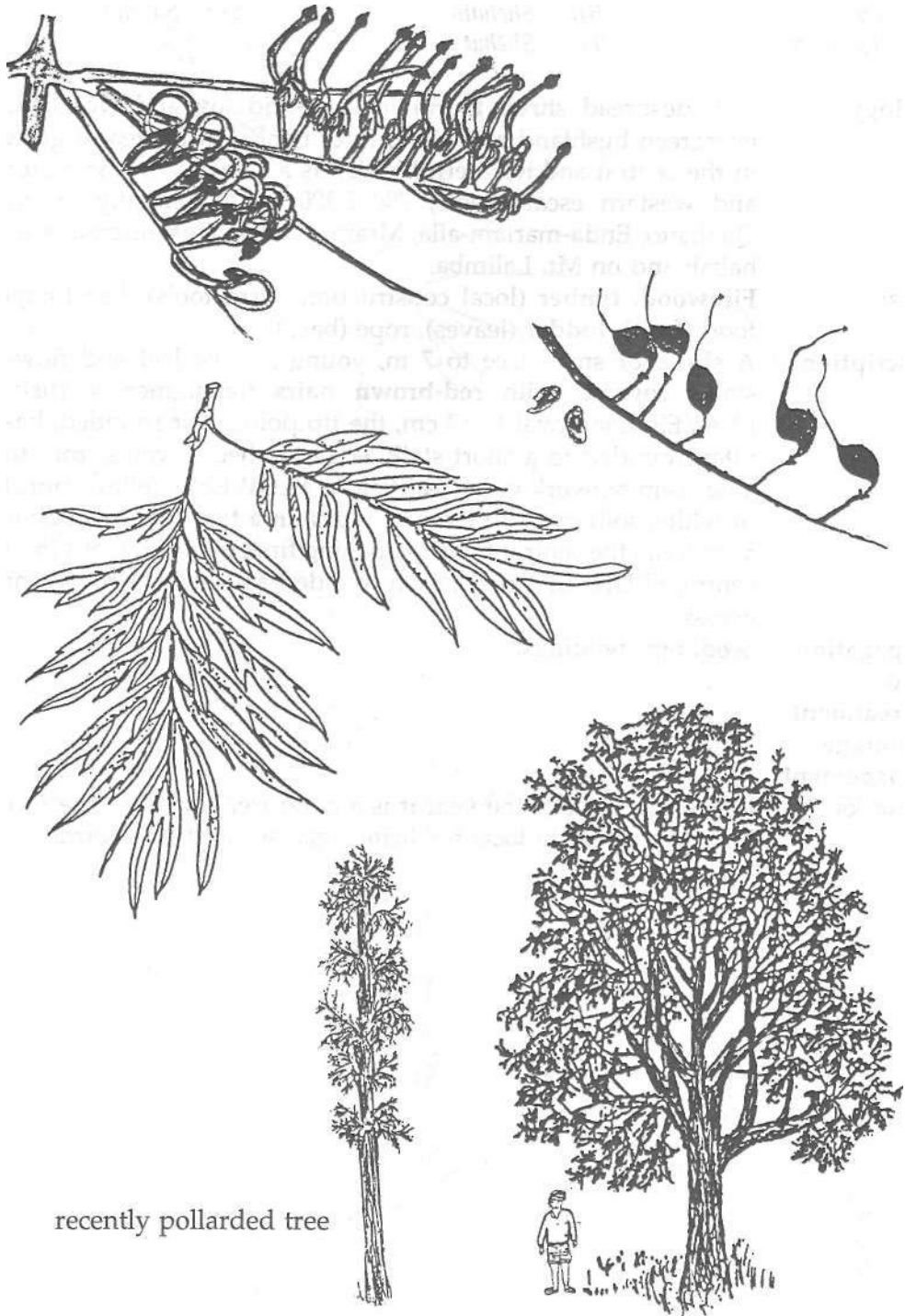
storage: Seed can be stored for up to three months, but this period can be extended if it is refrigerated.

Management: Moderate to fast growing; pollarding, lopping, coppicing and pruning. Only young trees coppice well.

Remarks: It can be an important dry-season fodder. The tree grows well with food crops if managed to reduce shade, but leaves do not rot easily. The timber is hard and has an attractive grain—the red-brown colour and silky surface being like that of the true oak, *Quercus*. *Grevillea* is not recommended for woodlots.

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recently pollarded tree