

Grewia bicolor

Tiliaceae

Indigenous

COMMON NAMES: **Boran:** Harowessa, Hororessa; **Chonyi:** Mkone; **Daasanach:** Suriech; **Kamba:** Ngalawa, Ndawa, Mulawa, Kikalawa, Ngalwa (fruit), Ilawa; **Kambe:** Mkone; **Kipsigis:** Setetit, Sitetet, Sitetooik (plural); **Luhya:** Lulala; **Luhya (Bukusu):** Kumufuniu; **Luo:** Powo; **Maasai:** Ositeti, Sitet; **Marakwet:** Siti (plural); **Mbeere:** Muragwa, Murawa; **Orma:** Haroru; **Pokot:** Sitet; **Rendille:** Dabach, Arlilo (fruit); **Samburu:** Lagrat denai, Lkarraiyo, Seteti, Sitet; **Sanya:** Haroru; **Somali:** Depi, Tebi, Debhi (Tana River), Dowee; **Swahili:** Mfukufuku, Mikoche; **Taita:** Mmara, Ndomoko; **Tharaka:** Murawa, Muraagwa; **Tugen:** Sitewo; **Turkana:** Ekali, Epat.

DESCRIPTION: A low shrub or tree, 2–10 m in dry deciduous woodland. Produces suckers and branches from the base of the main trunk. **BARK:** Smooth when young, dotted with breathing pores, later dark, rough and scaly. **LEAVES:** Oval to oblong, pointed, 1–8 cm, the edge finely toothed, shiny green above but pale grey-white below, drooping in heat. **FLOWERS:** Golden yellow, sweet smelling, small petals bent back over larger sepals. **FRUIT:** Usually consisting of a single lobe, rarely 2, each lobe rounded and soft, about 5–7 mm across, hairy at first, orange then black as it dries, edible, sweet but sharp on the tongue.

ECOLOGY: A common tree of the semi-arid tropics of Africa and India. Found in Kenya from coastal lowlands to the highlands, 0–1,800 m, but less common at the coast. Most common in lowlands in dry bushland and bushed grassland. Soils very varied but mainly red clay, sandy and rocky soils. Agroclimatic Zones III–VI. Flowers mainly in the rainy season; fruits about 3 months later.

USES: Firewood, poles (construction), posts, tool handles, carvings, utensils (stirrers, clubs), walking sticks, bows and arrows, edible fruit, medicine (roots), fodder (leaves and fruit), shade, fibre (bark for strings and ropes).

PROPAGATION: Seedlings, wildings, direct sowing at site. Root suckers are also produced. *Grewias* generally reproduce well naturally if protected from grazing and fire.

SEED: About 9,000–15,000 seeds per kg. Germination is good but sporadic, completed after 6 weeks.

treatment: Not necessary, but soaking in cold water for 12 hours may hasten germination.

storage: Seeds can be stored for a year at room temperature if kept dry.

MANAGEMENT: Slow growing; coppicing, pruning and thinning in pastures.

REMARKS: Most species of *Grewia* have edible fruit. *G. bicolor*, however, has hard seeds that are difficult to chew and the fruit is usually eaten by sucking off the thin sweet flesh on the outside and discarding the seeds. The seeds may cause constipation if ingested in large amounts. *Grewia* species are good sources of fibre. Their stems are often tough and durable, thus they find many uses in the household. Twigs from the tree are used by Kamba water diviners. The hard strong wood is used by the Maasai for clubs and spears.

FURTHER READING: <http://www.worldagroforestrycentre.org/Sites/TreeDBS/AFT/AFT.htm>; Backes and Ahenda, 1998; Beentje, 1994; Bekele-Tesemma et al., 1993; Blundell, 1987; Dharani, 2002; Katende et al., 1995; Kokwaro, 1993; Maundu et al., 1999; Mbuya et al., 1994; Noad and Birnie, 1989; Palgrave and Palgrave, 2002; Ruffo et al., 2002; von Maydell, 1990.

