

Grewia plagiophylla

Tiliaceae

Indigenous

COMMON NAMES: **Giriama:** Mkone; **Malakote:** Fahfa; **Orma:** Haroru hadda; **Pokomo:** Mkole; **Sanya:** Haroro korm, Haroro; **Somali:** Debhi; **Swahili:** Mkone; **Wardei:** Dhebi.

DESCRIPTION: A shrub or small tree to 7 m with a rather spreading crown. **BARK:** Grey, smooth on branches, fissured in old bark. **LEAVES:** Usually **widest from middle part towards the tip, asymmetrical, one side of leaf base extending down the leaf stalk much further than the other**; edge minutely toothed, to 6 x 13 cm long but usually much smaller; **shiny above, grey-green and densely hairy beneath**. **FLOWERS:** Yellow, in branched heads arising from sides of branches. **FRUIT:** Each **divided into 1–2 rounded lobes** that resemble individual fruits, each lobe to 7 mm across, with or without a few hairs on the surface.

ECOLOGY: Occurs in Tanzania and Kenya. In Kenya, mainly found at the coast, in forest edges, bushland and wooded grassland. Common on farms and in homesteads, where it is left as a shade tree and for cultural purposes.

Agroclimatic Zones III–V. Fruits in November–December at the coast.

USES: Poles, posts (for house construction), tool handles, edible fruit, medicine (roots, leaves, fibre of inner bark), ceremonial, fibre (bark, used for roofing), shade, ornamental.

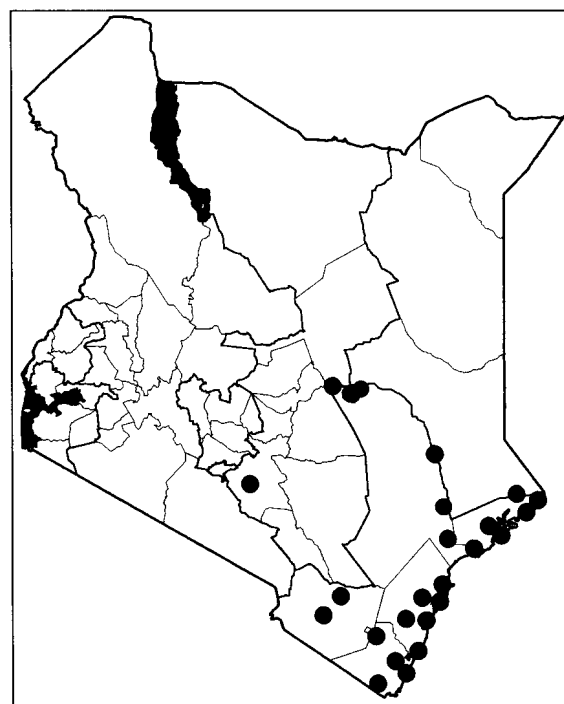
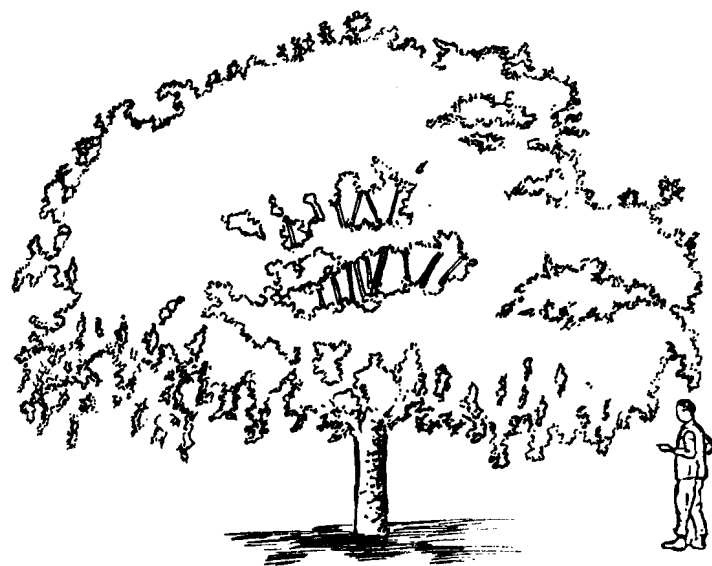
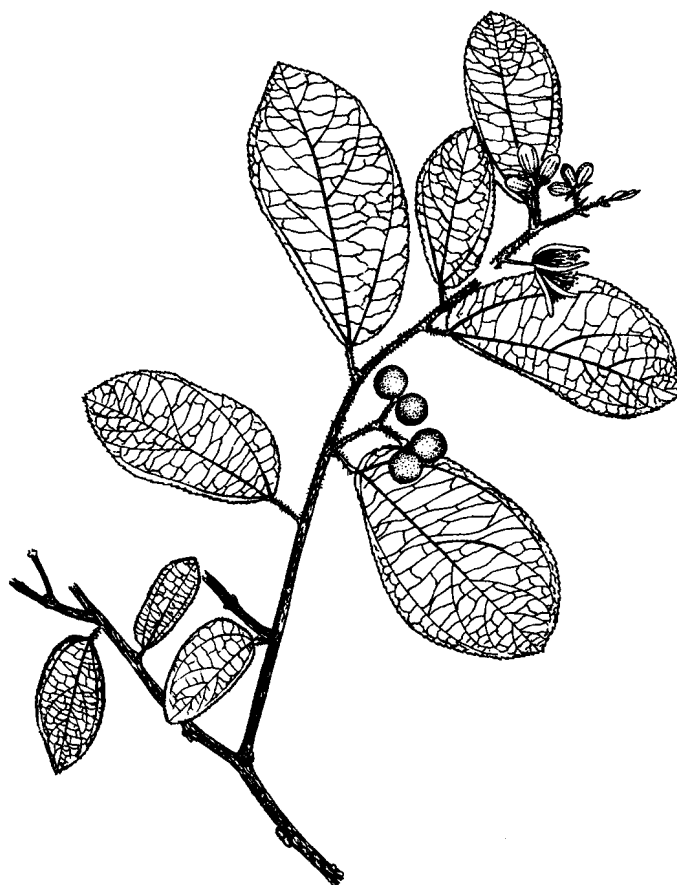
PROPAGATION: *Grewias* generally reproduce well naturally if protected from grazing and fire. Seedlings can be raised, wildings can be collected.

MANAGEMENT: Prune lower branches, support hanging branches.

REMARKS: The wood is very tough. It is the choice plant for bows, arrows, sticks and clubs (*rungu*). It is used in small construction, for poles and as a source of fibre. The stem is carved into flat human-like pieces that are erected in the homestead to represent departed ancestors (Giriama).

A closely related species is *G. mollis* (**Kamba:** Kikumi; **Luo:** Powo; **Maasai:** Ositeti; **Nandi:** Didiyot; **Pokot:** Epat; **Rendille:** Dabach; **Samburu:** Siteti; **Somali:** Debhi

ad, Ged mured; **Turkana:** Epat), which, unlike *G. plagiophylla*, does not extend to the coast. The bark is thick, flaking to expose green underneath. Leaves up to 12 x 6 cm, widest in the middle, base rounded to slightly asymmetrical, underside with dense soft grey hairs. Flowers yellow. Fruit with 1 or 2 lobes, each up to 7 mm. This species is widely distributed, particularly in



***Grewia plagiophylla* (cont)**

subhumid to semi-arid parts of Kenya in wooded grassland and woodland; 700–1,900 m. Agroclimatic Zones III–IV. *G. mollis* may grow to a small tree in semi-arid areas where it provides excellent shade. The wood is used for construction poles. It also has potential as an ornamental.

FURTHER READING: Beentje, 1994; Kokwaro, 1993.

