

Grewia similis

Tiliaceae

Indigenous

- Common names: Bond: mnangu; Goro: saski; Hehe: mpelemehe; Iraqw: furudou, mgombaryandi, saski; Nyam: mkomabubu; Nyat: mukhantokhanto; Nyir: mukuma; Rangi: mnangu; Samb: mnangu; Swah: mkole; Zara: mkole mweupe.
- Ecology: Widespread along the coast and in Acacia woodlands and dry montane forests. In Tanzania it is common in the Usambara Mountains, in coastal areas, Mbulu, Iringa and Njombe.
- Uses: Firewood, poles, utensils (storage pots), food (leaves, fruit), medicine (bark), fodder (leaves).
- Description: A shrub, 2-3 m, sometimes a climber. BARK: grey or grey-brown, smooth at first, becoming rough and flaking with age; fibrous. LEAVES: shiny dark green above, hairy below, oval to rounded, about 5 cm long, often smaller, tip rounded or notched, base rounded, not one-sided, 3 *clear* veins from the base, edge finely toothed. FLOWERS: bright mauve or pink, sometimes white. Produced in terminal shoots or between the leaf and branchlet, 3-6 together, star shaped, 5 sepals pointed and mauve inside, as long or longer than petals. FRUIT: small fleshy berries. bright red or orange when ripe, deeply 4-lobed, each 6 mm across.
- Propagation: Seedlings, suckers.
- Seed info.: No. of seeds per kg: 10,000-15,000. Germination is good but takes a long time (6 weeks),
- treatment: soak in cold water for 12 hours.
- storage: can keep viability for a year at room temperature if kept dry.
- Management: Slow growing; coppicing.
- Remarks: Potential for use along contour strips and on slopes Pounded leaves are used as a dry-season vegetable in West Usambara. The sticky substance under the bark has been used as a cure for sores.

