

Grewia villosa

Tiliaceae

Indigenous

COMMON NAMES: **Bajun:** Mukorobasha, Mukorobasho; **Boran:** Ogumdi, Morudo, Ogomdi, Muruudo, Moorodah; **Daasanach:** Barbar; **Gabra:** Ogomdi; **Ichamus:** Lpupoi, Lpupo; **Kamba:** Muvu, Mbu (fruit); **Luo:** Ner powo; **Maasai:** Olpompoi, Olmankulai, Emankulai, Ilmangulai (plural); **Marakwet:** Mongurwa; **Mbeere:** Mubuu; **Pokot:** Mokoghio, Mokuwo, Makow (plural); **Rendille:** Obhoob; **Samburu:** Lpupoi, Lpopoi, Najipouwis; **Somali:** Kobbish; **Swahili:** Mukoroboshu; **Taita:** Mshoshote, Mshashote, Shoshoti; **Tharaka:** Mubuu; **Tugen:** Mokuiwo; **Turkana:** Epoko, Epongae, Epokoo.

DESCRIPTION: A deciduous spreading shrub about 3 m with very distinctive leaves; young parts covered with **pale silky hairs**, branches purple-brown. **LEAVES:** **Almost round to 20 cm across**, on stalks to 4 cm, base heart-shaped or slightly so, margin toothed, paler below and more hairy, **5 veins clearly seen**. **FLOWERS:** Pink, turning yellow with age, in **small clusters without stalks**, **opposite leaves**. **FRUIT:** Usually without lobes, **soft and hairy** when ripe, yellow to red-brown, about 1 cm across.

ECOLOGY: A shrub of the arid areas of Africa and India. In Africa it is found from the Cape Verde Islands and Senegal in West Africa to Sudan, Eritrea and Kenya, further east to India and south to South Africa, often on river banks liable to flooding, or on stony ground in the shade of larger trees. Found in all drier areas of Kenya in *Acacia-Commiphora* bushland and thickets, 0–1,500 m. Also near Lake Victoria in dry bushland. Common on well-drained sites with shallow luggas. Red, sandy, rocky and occasionally black-cotton soil. Agroclimatic Zones IV–VII (riverine). Flowering during the rainy season; in fruit in Makueni and Tsavo in January.

USES: Firewood, construction (stems used as withies for the construction of small grain stores), poles, tool handles, walking sticks, bows and arrows, bird-trapping cages, spear shafts, edible fruit (raw, dried or cooked), medicine (roots and bark), fodder (leaves for camels, sheep, goats and cattle), shade, fibre (bark for strings), veterinary medicine.

PROPAGATION: Seedlings, direct sowing at site. *Grewias* generally reproduce well naturally if protected from grazing and fire.

SEED: About 16,000–17,000 seeds per kg.

treatment: Soak in cold water for 12 hours. Germination is good and completed after 6 weeks.

storage: Can be stored for a year if kept cool in airtight containers.

MANAGEMENT: Slow growing. Thinning in pastures.

REMARKS: A much-liked sweet fruit.

FURTHER READING: Beentje, 1994; Bein et al., 1996; Bekele-Tesemma et al., 1993; Blundell, 1987; ITDG and IIRR, 1996; Katende et al., 1999; Kokwaro, 1993; Maundu et al., 1999; Mbuya et al., 1994; Palgrave and Palgrave, 2002; Ruffo et al., 2002; von Maydell, 1990.

