

Hagenia abyssinica

Rosaceae

Indigenous

COMMON NAMES: **Kikuyu:** Muhooru, Muthithiku, Mumondo; **Kipsigis:** Bondet; **Kisii:** Oinokunakuna, Omukunakuna; **Marakwet:** Seweruwa; **Meru:** Mujogajaga, Mujogajoga; **Nandi:** Mjororuet, Njororuet; **Sabaot:** Sokoruet.

DESCRIPTION: A tree to 25 m or more, with a short broad trunk and thick often crooked branches, the crown leafy and rounded to umbrella-shaped. **BARK:** Red-brown, thick, flaking irregularly, branchlets covered in silky brown hairs and ringed with leaf scars. **LEAVES:** Compound to 40 cm in **large terminal tufts**, 5–8 leaflets on each side, leaflets bright green above, covered with **silvery hairs below**, red and sticky when young, **leaf edge toothed and fringed with hairs, stalk winged, hairy.** **FLOWERS:** In large attractive masses to 60 cm, female heads **pink-red**, male heads more feathery, orange-white. The sexes are on different trees. **FRUIT:** Tiny.

ECOLOGY: A tree confined to Africa, from Ethiopia to Malawi. It is found in upland rainforest at even higher altitudes than bamboo. Occasionally the dominant tree of the woodland zone just above the mountain bamboo where it may also be co-dominant with *Hypericum*. May be the last tree before moorland on Mt Kenya; 2,400–3,600 m, occasionally found at lower altitudes in Kericho, Limuru, Kiambu. Often mixed with *Olea europaea* subsp. *africana* and *Juniperus procera* at lower altitudes. The tree has been successfully grown at altitudes as low as 1,800 m. Agroclimatic Zones I–II.

USES: Firewood, charcoal, timber, furniture, poles, flooring, carving, medicine (female flowers, bark and roots), bee forage, ornamental, mulch, soil conservation, firebreak, veterinary medicine.

PROPAGATION: Seedlings, wildings. The fruit should be collected just after they have turned brown. Later than that the fruit will remain on the tree but are attacked by insects. After collection, dry in the sun but protected from wind. Germination is usually after about 2 weeks. Seedlings may be ready for replanting after 6–8 months.

SEED: Average about 225,000 seeds per kg. Some seed catalogues give figures as high as 450,000.

treatment: Not necessary.

storage: Seed can be stored for 6–12 months.

MANAGEMENT: Pruning to get a good bole. Does not always coppice.

REMARKS: The wood is dark red, hard and useful for furniture, but attacked by borers, hence not a major target for poachers. It is often damaged by elephants. Better known locally for its important medicinal uses (dried female flowers are anthelmintic and purgative). Not competitive with crops if managed to prevent shading.

FURTHER READING: <http://www.worldagroforestrycentre.org/Sites/TreeDBS/AFT/AFT.htm>; Albrecht, 1993; Beentje, 1994; Bekele-Tesemma et al., 1993; Blundell, 1987; Dharani, 2002; Fichtl and Adi, 1994; ITDG and IIRR, 1996; Katende et al., 1995; Kokwaro, 1993; Mbuya et al., 1994; Noad and Birnie, 1989; Sommerlatte and Sommerlatte, 1990.

