

Jacaranda mimosifolia**Bignoniaceae****Brazil**

COMMON NAMES: **English:** Jacaranda; **Kikuyu:** Mucakaranda; **Kisii:** Omosaria.

DESCRIPTION: A deciduous tree up to 20 m with spreading branches making a light crown. **BARK:** Pale grey and smooth, rough and peeling with age. **LEAVES:** Bipinnate and feathery on a stalk to 40 cm, up to 30 pairs of pinnae bearing the little pointed leaflets. **FLOWERS:** Striking blue-violet, in clusters, each flower bell-shaped to 4 cm, usually on the bare tree before leaf growth. **FRUIT:** Rounded, woody capsules to 7 cm across with a wavy edge, brown-black when mature, splitting on the tree to set free many light winged seeds. Capsules may hang on the tree for up to 2 years.

ECOLOGY: Widely grown as an ornamental throughout the highland tropics, up to 2,200 m. In Kenya, grows in most soils except waterlogged ones. Deep rooted. Grows best in wetter highlands but can grow in some drier areas, e.g. Machakos. Agroclimatic Zones II–V. The main flowering period is September–November in Nairobi with an October peak, and January in Kisumu, but a small number of flowers may be seen throughout the year on individual trees.

USES: Firewood, poles, carvings, bee forage, shade, ornamental, avenue tree, windbreak.

PROPAGATION: Seedlings, wildings.

SEED: Seeds profusely; 63,000–80,000 seeds per kg; germination rate 50–85%.

treatment: Not necessary

storage: Seed does not store well. Sow fresh seed for best result.

MANAGEMENT: Very fast growing on good sites; lopping, pollarding, coppicing, pruning (young trees).

REMARKS: A greedy feeder with an aggressive root system. Few plants can grow below this tree and it is unsuitable for intercropping. Flowering is an indicator of the onset of the rains in many areas. The wood is soft, white and polishes well. It is commonly used for carving household utensils. This is one of the earliest exotic tree species to

be introduced to Kenya. It is now a common ornamental, avenue and shade tree in both humid and dry areas throughout Kenya. *Jacaranda* is a genus of a few dozen members, mainly trees and shrubs of tropical American origin.

FURTHER READING: <http://www.worldagroforestrycentre.org/Sites/TreeDBS/AFT/AFT.htm>; Bein et al., 1996; Bekele-Tesemma et al., 1993; Dharani, 2002; Fichtl and Adi, 1994; Katende et al., 1995; Lötschert and Beese, 1983; Mbuya et al., 1994; Noad and Birnie, 1989; Palgrave and Palgrave, 2002; Storrs, 1979.

