

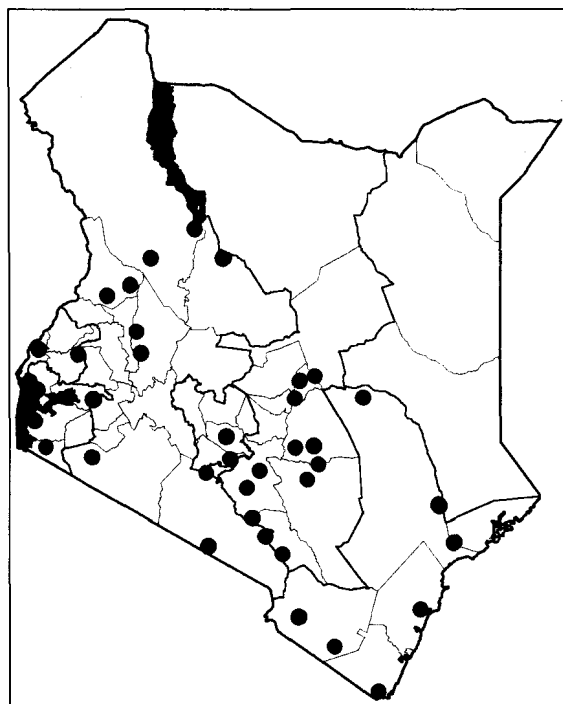
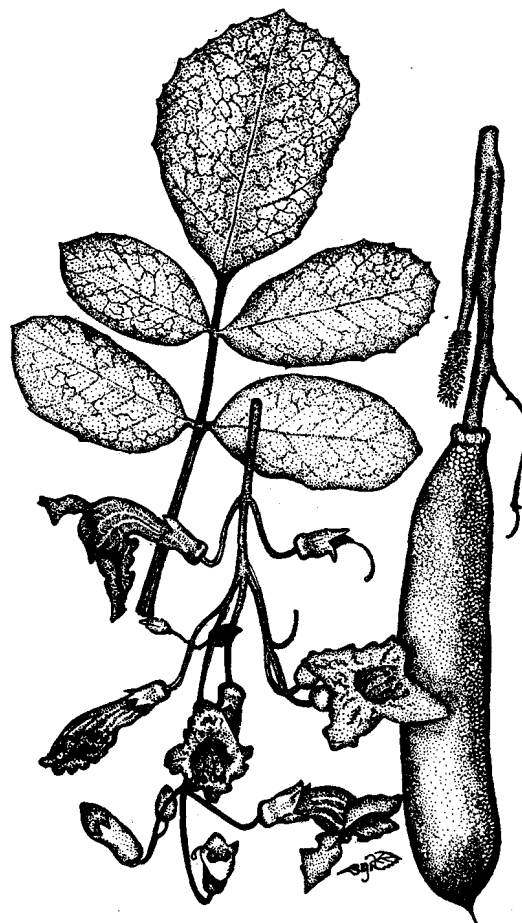
Kigelia africana* (K. aethiopum, K. pinnata)*Bignoniaceae****Indigenous**

COMMON NAMES: **Boni:** Shelola, Shelole; **English:** Sausage tree; **Giriama:** Mobwoka, Muratina; **Kamba:** Muatine (tree/fruit); **Kikuyu:** Muratina; **Kipsigis:** Ratuinet; **Luhya (Bukusu):** Kumufungu; **Luo:** Yago; **Maasai:** Oldarpoi, Oltarpoi; **Marakwet:** Rotio; **Meru:** Murantina, Muratina; **Nandi:** Ratuinet; **Orma:** Bogh; **Pokomo:** Mbwoka; **Pokot:** Roti (plural), Rotin; **Rendille:** Muun; **Samburu:** Imombi; **Somali:** Bukuraal; **Swahili:** Mwengea, Mwegea, Mvungunya; **Taita:** Mwasina, Mwaisina; **Taveta:** Mukisha; **Tharaka:** Muthigu, Muratina; **Turkana:** Edot.

DESCRIPTION: A semi-deciduous tree with a rounded crown, to 9 m in open woodland but 18 m beside rivers. **BARK:** Grey-brown, smooth, flaking in round patches with age. **LEAVES:** Compound, **growing in 3s**, at the end of branches, few leaflets, each broadly oval, **very rough and hard, up to 10 cm**, often with a **sharp tip, edge wavy**. **FLOWERS:** On long rope-like stalks, 2–3 m. Horizontal, reddish branches, in 3s, bear upturned trumpet-like flowers, petals folded and wavy, **dark maroon with heavy yellow veins** outside; an unpleasant smell. **FRUIT:** Large **grey-green 'sausages'**, 30–60 cm long. Hanging stalks remain on the tree. Several kilos of fibrous pulp contain the seeds—released only when fruit rots on the ground.

ECOLOGY: Widespread in tropical Africa. Also found in India. A tree of savanna and along rivers in arid areas. Distributed in Kenya from the coast to the highlands in wooded grassland, shrubland and riverine vegetation. Common on hillsides, 0–2,200 m. Does best in well-drained soils, especially loam, red clay and on rocky ground. Also found in valley bottoms. Rainfall 500–1,500 mm. Agroclimatic Zones II–V. Fruits persist on the tree, and are occasionally seen even when the plant is flowering. Flowers in December–January (Kitui). Fruits in April–May, and occasionally in December–January in Kitui, Machakos, Tharaka, Makueni, Mwingi; flowers in March–April and fruits in August–November in Nyanza and western Kenya.

USES: Firewood, charcoal, furniture (stools), poles, beehives, utensils (water troughs, mortars, milk pots), boat building (canoes), drink (fruit used in fermentation of sugar cane and honey beer), medicine (fruit, leaves, stem bark, root), fodder (leaves), bee forage, veterinary medicine, ceremonial, shade, ornamental, windbreak.



Kigelia africana (cont)

PROPAGATION: Seedlings, direct sowing at site. Cut ripe fruit in half lengthwise and put cut side down on a patch of rich, moist soil. After a few weeks there will be many seedlings.

SEED: Not a prolific seeder; 3,400–6,000 seeds per kg. Poor germination rate and slow to germinate.

treatment: Not necessary.

storage: Seed does not store for long.

MANAGEMENT: Slow growing; pruning and pollarding, coppices readily.

REMARKS: A ceremonial tree revered by most communities and usually preserved on farms while other tree species are cut. The tree is most well known for its sausage-like fruits, which are opened lengthwise and used for fermenting traditional beer (Kamba, Kikuyu, Mbeere, Embu, Tharaka, Giriama, Digo). A fruit is buried to symbolize

the body of a lost person believed to be dead (Luo, Luhya). Some other communities bury a piece of stem in a similar ceremony. Not planted around the homestead but planted to mark grave sites (Luo). The unripe fruit is poisonous. The tree is not competitive to crops. Fruit of commercial value for use in beer making. *Kigelia* is a genus probably consisting of just this one very variable member, whose synonym, *K. pinnata*, is also widely used.

FURTHER READING: <http://www.worldagroforestrycentre.org/Sites/TreeDBS/AFT/AFT.htm>; Backes and Ahenda, 1998; Beentje, 1994; Bein et al., 1996; Bekele-Tesemma et al., 1993; Blundell, 1987; Dharani, 2002; Katende et al., 1995, 1999; Kokwaro, 1993; Lötschert and Beese, 1983; Maundu et al., 1999; Mbuya et al., 1994; Noad and Birnie, 1989; Palgrave and Palgrave, 2002; Ruffo et al., 2002; Storrs, 1979; van Wyk, 1993.

