

***Lannea alata*****Anacardiaceae****Indigenous**

**COMMON NAMES:** **Boran:** Kumude; **Giriama:** Manga, Mnthungu **Kamba:** Kikolya (Makueni), Kitungu (Mwingi), Ndungu (fruit), Ngolya (fruit); **Malakote:** Sufi bara, Supu bora; **Orma:** Kumudhe; **Rendille:** Bejelo; **Samburu:** Ikinoi, Kinoi; **Somali:** Kumudhe (Tana River), Wanreh; **Taita:** Mshiga, Ngarizo; **Tharaka:** Mituungu.

**DESCRIPTION:** A much-branched spreading deciduous shrub usually 1.5–4 m high, with drooping branches and a spiky appearance. **BARK:** Dark grey, smooth. Stem base and main roots normally covered with brown, thread-like growths resembling cotton wool. **LEAVES:** Usually clustered on short shoots and divided into tiny leaflets which are bluntly toothed towards the tip; midrib often winged. **FLOWERS:** Borne in groups, their common stalk arising together with that of leaves in the short shoots, greenish yellow, small, inconspicuous. **FRUIT:** Up to 2 cm across, fleshy, green turning yellow to orange or red-brown on ripening. Seeds green with a rough surface.

**ECOLOGY:** Occurs in Somalia, coastal areas and inland parts of eastern and north-eastern Kenya and northern Tanzania. In Kenya, may be found for example in Mandera, Tana River and Kitui on rocky hillsides, in *Acacia-Commiphora* bushland; often associated with *Acacia tortilis*, *Adansonia digitata*, *Delonix alata*, *Grewia* species, *Lannea triphylla* and *Sterculia stenocarpa* in light red clay and in rocky areas, 0–1,200 m. Rainfall 400–600 mm. Agroclimatic Zones V–VI. Flowers in September–October in Makueni, Tharaka, Kitui and Taita, and in December in Tana River; fruits in February–March in Makueni, Tharaka, Kitui, Taita and Wajir, in May in Mandera, in July–August in Kilifi and Kwale, and in December in Garissa.

**USES:** Firewood, edible fruit, medicine, fodder (fruit for goats and camels), fibre ('wool' from roots).

**PROPAGATION:** Direct sowing at site, seedlings, cuttings. Sow seed in pots if seedlings are to be raised.

**SEED:** Fruit can be collected on the ground under the trees, either fresh or dry. Soak fruit, separate seed from pulp and dry the seed or sow immediately.

**treatment:** Soaking in lukewarm or cold water may improve germination if seeds were dried.

**storage:** Best to use fresh seed.

**MANAGEMENT:** The haphazard spreading habit needs to be controlled by pruning.

**REMARKS:** Fruit are edible and much liked (Samburu, Somali, Rendille, Boran, Kamba, Taita). They are sweet but also have a rather sour taste. With good rains fruit are juicy. They are sold in Mwingi District. 'Wool' from the roots used for stuffing pillows and mattresses (Somali, Tharaka, Kamba, Mbeere). An excellent fruit tree for drylands. *Lannea* is a genus of several dozen members found mainly in savanna parts of Africa but also extending to south Asia.

**FURTHER READING:** Beentje, 1994; Blundell, 1987; Maundu et al., 1999.

