

Lannea schweinfurthii**Anacardiaceae****Indigenous**

COMMON NAMES: **Boni:** Waharr; **Boran:** Ile, Tile; **Digo:** Mnyumbu; **Giriama:** Mjumbu maji, Mukivure, Kyuasi; **Kamba:** Kyuasi, Muasi, Mwethi; **Luo:** Bongo, Kuogo, Kwogo; **Maasai:** Orpande; **Mbeere:** Moino; **Pokot:** Orolwo; **Samburu:** Muthuchi; **Swahili:** Mongo, Mnyumbu, Mnyumbu maji; **Taveta:** Rubandi; **Tharaka:** Muthuchi.

DESCRIPTION: A deciduous shrub or tree, to 20 m, with irregular branching habit, rounded often dense crown, branchlets drooping. **BARK:** Grey-brown, fairly smooth, flaking when older. **LEAVES:** Compound, usually crowded at the ends of branches, few leaflets, usually 3–5, shiny and stiff, oval, larger terminal leaflet to 9 cm, tips blunt, leaf stalk grooved. **FLOWERS:** Strongly scented, small, cream coloured, in hanging spikes to 20 cm. Male and female trees. **FRUIT:** Oblong 1–2 cm, red-brown, fleshy, edible.

ECOLOGY: Widespread in Africa from Sudan and Somalia to South Africa, 0–1,800 m. Common in wooded grassland, dry forest, river valleys. It is found all over Kenya, particularly in subhumid and semi-arid areas, in woodland, wooded grassland and bushland. Commonly found on sandy soils and steep rocky places. Agroclimatic Zones III–V. Flowers in December–January (Kitui) and November–December in Nyanza and Western Provinces; fruits in January–March (Kitui, Mwingi and Coast).

USES: Firewood, charcoal, timber (doors), furniture (stools), beehives, tool handles, utensils (mortars, containers), walking sticks, cart wheels, edible fruit, drink (tea from soft fleshy bark), medicine (bark and root), fodder (leaves), bee forage, shade, fibre (inner bark for string, stuffing material from roots), basketry (inner bark), live fence, dye (bark).

PROPAGATION: Seedlings, cuttings, root suckers. 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; 40,000–45,000 seeds per kg. Germination is good and completed within 45 days.

treatment: Soaking in lukewarm or cold water may improve germination if seeds were dried. No treatment required for fresh seed.

storage: Best to use fresh seed.

MANAGEMENT: Fast growing; lopping, pollarding.

REMARKS: The inner bark is a source of string (Maasai) and used to make grain containers and baskets (*syondo*: Kamba). The brown dye obtained from bark is used to decorate the baskets. A brown 'wool' used for stuffing mattresses is obtained from roots just below the ground surface (Kamba, Tharaka, Mbeere). The large trunk is carved into stools, beehives, mortars and drums for storing honey (Kamba, Tharaka). The tree is resistant to fire. Branches are very flexible, the white wood is soft and light.

FURTHER READING: Beentje, 1994; Blundell, 1987; Katende et al., 1995, 1999; Kokwaro, 1993; Maundu et al., 1999; Mbuya et al., 1994; Ruffo et al., 2002; Storrs, 1979.

