

Manilkara sulcata**Sapotaceae****Indigenous**

COMMON NAMES: **Bajun:** Mkurati; **Boni:** Kuragi; **Digo:** Nzezi, Mtsezi; **Giriama:** Mtsezi, Mtsedzi; **Pokomo:** Muaraghidhe; **Sanya:** Kuraga; **Swahili:** Mchambigi, Mchedi, Mcheje mume, Mtewaji; **Wardei:** Waradeya.

DESCRIPTION: An evergreen shrub or small much-branched tree, usually 3–6 m. **BARK:** Grey, only slight longitudinal grooves. **LEAVES:** Small, dark shiny green above, paler below, clustered at branch tips, oval and wider at the tip, which is notched or rounded, 2.5–8 cm long, only young shoots, buds and flower stalks are covered with dense rusty hairs. **FLOWERS:** Cream, yellow-green, in groups of 2–6 beside leaves, each flower to 5 mm long with pale green divided petal lobes surrounded by 2 rows of sepals. **FRUIT:** Long oval, pale green-yellow to 1.3 cm long, without hairs, tipped by the old style, containing one seed in sweet edible pulp.

ECOLOGY: Known only from the coastal region and adjacent areas in Kenya, north-eastern Tanzania, Zanzibar and Pemba. Common in *Cynometra* thickets, coastal bushland, *Brachystegia* woodland and coastal forests, mainly on sandy and especially coastal red sandy soils; 0–1,000 m. Agroclimatic Zones II–IV. Flowers in May–June, November–December and fruits in February–March and August–September in Kwale and Kilifi.

USES: Firewood, timber (rough construction), carvings, utensils (combs, wooden spoons), fishing rods, edible fruit, medicine (leaves, roots).

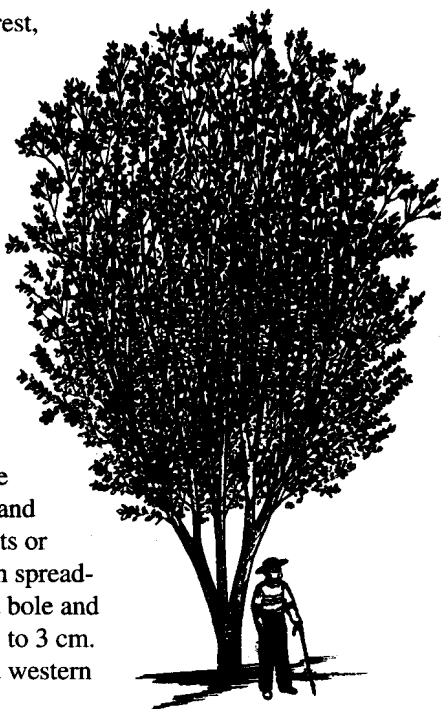
PROPAGATION: Seedlings

REMARKS: Ripe fruit edible and sweet. Fruits, known as 'marafa' in Malindi, are also much liked by elephants. The wood is hard and is used in construction and for many other purposes by the Giriama. Most *Manilkara* species in Kenya have sweet and edible fruits, which are much liked despite their usually small size.

Other notable species are:

M. discolor a dry forest, usually riverine, tree to 20 m with dark grey bark. Leaves clustered towards the end of branchlets. Flowers yellow, in clusters. Found in northern, central and southern parts of Kenya and in coastal hinterlands.

M. butugi (Luhya: Lunduli) is a tall tree occurring in upland and western Kenya forests or riverine, usually with spreading crown, a straight bole and relatively large fruit, to 3 cm. Found in central and western



parts of Kenya and in Uganda, southern Sudan and Ethiopia.

FURTHER READING: Beentje, 1994; Kokwaro, 1993; Maundu et al., 1999; Ruffo et al., 2002.

