

***Mimusops obtusifolia* (*M. fruticosa*)**

Sapotaceae

Indigenous

COMMON NAMES: **Boran:** Denyo; **Chonyi:** Mng'ambo kapehe; **Giriama:** Mng'ambo kapehe, Mtsami; **Kambe:** Mng'ambo kapehe; **Malakote:** Munugau; **Orma:** Kolati, Qolati; **Pokomo:** Munguvwe, Nguvwe (fruit); **Sanya:** Badhesa; **Somali:** Kolati (Tana River); **Swahili:** Mng'ambo kapee, Mnguvi.

DESCRIPTION: A large evergreen tree to 15 m or more or, rarely, a shrub and resembling *Manilkara sansibarensis*. Young branches with hairs that are soon lost. **BARK:** Dark grey, rough with grooves. **LEAVES:** Up to 5 x 8 cm, widest in the middle or towards the tip, which is usually notched, occasionally rounded or sharply pointed, narrowing towards the base to a stalk about 1 cm long, shiny green above, dull green below. **FLOWERS:** Star-like, cream, petals in 2 whorls. Arising several at a time in each axil. **FRUIT:** Orange to red, round to 2.5 cm in diameter, skin rather tough, pulp enclosing several seeds.

ECOLOGY: Grows in eastern and southern Africa, Madagascar and the Comoro Islands. In Kenya, confined to the coastal areas in dry coastal forests, bushland and near sand dunes. Also found along lower parts of River Tana, 0–400 m. Agroclimatic Zones IV–VII (riverine).

USES: Firewood, charcoal, timber, poles (house construction), carving, canoe building, spear shafts, bee forage, edible fruit, medicine (roots), shade.

PROPAGATION: Seedlings.

SEED: Remove the pulp, clean the seed and sow.

treatment: Not necessary.

storage: Can be stored for some time, but susceptible to insect attack.

MANAGEMENT: The young trees perform best under shade, and some shade is needed to get a trunk of good timber quality. Fairly fast growing.

REMARKS: This species has one of the best indigenous fruits.

M. somalensis (**Digo:** Mgama) is a related medium-sized tree with leaves clustered at the end of shoots. Found in coastal Kenya and Tanzania only. Fruits are good to eat and the wood is used for timber and firewood. Roots are used in veterinary medicine. *Mimusops* is a genus closely related to *Manilkara*. It has a few dozen species, found mainly in tropical Africa and the Indian Ocean islands.

FURTHER READING: Beentje, 1994; Maundu et al., 1999; Palgrave and Palgrave, 2002.

