

## Moringa stenopetala

## Moringaceae

### Indigenous

**COMMON NAMES:** **Boni:** Safara; **Daasanach:** Hocholoch; **Samburu:** Lorsanjo; **Somali:** Mau, Mawali, Mawe (Mandera); **Tharaka:** Muguunda.

**DESCRIPTION:** A tree up to 9 m with a **much-branched crown and soft branches with bright green feathery foliage.** **BARK:** Smooth, grey-white. **LEAVES:** Compound, 2–3 pinnate, large, to 55 cm long, first division consisting of about 5 pairs of primary branches each with up to 9 leaflets, each up to about 6 cm. **FLOWERS:** Small, petals to 1 cm, parts in 5s, sweet-scented, white to cream, in numerous long, lax sprays each up to 60 cm. **FRUIT:** Long, pod-like capsules to 50 cm long, **reddish with a grey bloom**, opening to release long, **3-winged seeds.**

**ECOLOGY:** Found in Ethiopia and Kenya. In Kenya, occurs mainly in Baringo, Isiolo, Marsabit and Turkana Districts in riverine vegetation and along lakes. Particularly common in sandy areas with a high water table, but also seen on rocky ground. Common around Isiolo and on the islands in Lake Baringo. The species becomes riverine in the very dry areas. It is now cultivated in several areas; 450–1,200 m. Agroclimatic Zones V–VII (riverine).

**USES:** Firewood, edible leaves, edible fruit capsules, water purification (pounded seeds), medicine (roots), shade, ornamental.

**PROPAGATION:** Seedlings, cuttings.

### SEED:

**treatment:** Not necessary.

**storage:** Seed can be stored for long periods.

**MANAGEMENT:** Coppicing.

**REMARKS:** This species, like its relative *M. oleifera*, has potential as a food plant. The pod-like fruit and the leaves

are used as a vegetable, for example in Mandera and in Ethiopia by the Konso. Seeds are used for purifying muddy water (Somali).

**FURTHER READING:** Albrecht, 1993; Beentje, 1994; Dharani, 2002; Maundu et al., 1999; Noad and Birnie, 1989.

