

China

- Common names: Eng: mulberry, white mulberry; **Samb:** mlobe; **Swah:** mforsadi, mfurusadi.
- Ecology: A tree native to warm temperate Asia, probably of mountainous China where it can reach over 20 m. Now widely cultivated in tropical Africa where it is much smaller, sometimes naturalized. It has been widely planted in Tanzania for its edible fruit, including drier areas of the country as it tolerates drought and heat once established. It does better in moist climates up to 2,000 m, and is also commonly planted in Arusha and Kilimanjaro Regions where it is frost resistant.
- Uses: Firewood, timber, tools, food (fruit, leaves), fodder (leaves, shoots), bee forage, soil conservation, ornamental, shade, windbreak, live fence, silkworms (leaves).
- Description:** A small deciduous tree, about 5 m, bole rarely straight, soon branching to a rounded crown. **BARK:** smooth pink-grey when young, long lines of lenticels. Branchlets red-brown, hang low. When cut white latex spills out. **LEAVES:** **very variable** even on the same branch, **broadly ovate to heart shaped or 3 lobed**, 3 clear nerves from the base, 5-15 cm long but **usually small**. Leaf base cordate, often unequal sided, edge coarsely toothed, tip pointed. Some hairs on both sides but **leaves feel smooth above** (not rough), nerves hairy below. A leaf stalk to 5 cm. **FLOWERS:** male and female, often on separate branches, tiny green-white flowers on **hanging spikes** about **1 cm, few or no hairs**. **FRUIT:** compound, to 2 cm with white-yellow-pink sections, may be dark red to black on one side. Edible, sweet and juicy but rather tasteless.
- Propagation** Seedlings, cuttings.
- Seed info.:** Poor germination. No. of seeds per kg: 325,000-700,000.
- treatment:** soak in cold water for 48 hours,
- storage:** can be stored a long time if kept cold.
- Management:** Fast growing, especially when grown from cuttings.
- Remarks:** Leaves are food for silkworms. The yellow-brown **wood**, hard and tough, has been used elsewhere to make hockey sticks. Saplings grown from seed produce fruit in 5-8 years but cuttings in 3 years. The tree can be used as a hedge or to stabilize slopes.

