

Morus nigra (M. japonica)

Moracem

Western Asia, Persia

- Common names: Eng: black mulberry; Samb: mlobe; Swah: mforsadi.
- Ecology: One of ten *Morus* species all with juicy compound fruit. Widely cultivated in the Middle East and warmer parts of Europe the Black Persian Mulberry is one variety. Both *M. nigra* and *M. alba* have been introduced to Africa, **each** species requiring different conditions. Although temperate in origin, *Morus* species grow surprisingly well in **arid** conditions from sea level to 2,000 m with little attention and taking easily from cuttings. *M. nigra* grows best at lower altitudes and at the coast and is preferred for its abundant sweet fruit and ornamental shape. It is not as widespread in Tanzania as *M. alba*.
- Uses: Firewood, food (fruit), fodder (leaves, fruit), bee forage, medicine (roots), ornamental, live fence.
- Description: A semi-deciduous shrub, usually 2-5 m, or a well-branched tree to 7 m with a spreading rounded crown. BARK: grey-brown, rough with age, resinous gum if cut. LEAVES: **large** and heart shaped, or broadly ovate, not lobed, 10-20 cm, the edge with large teeth, tip pointed, dull green **and** rough above, slightly hairy below. FLOWERS: sexes separate on the same tree, small green-white flowers on drooping spikes, female flowers with long soft hairs, small and crowded. FRUIT: compound, cylindrical, red **then** purple-black when ripe to 2.5 cm long (stains badly).
- Propagation: Cuttings.
- Seed info.: Not important as the tree is propagated from cuttings.
- treatment:
- storage:
- Management: Fast growing.
- Remarks: The tree grows rapidly from cuttings and bears fruit about 3 years. Both goats and cattle browse the leaves and shoots so young saplings need protection. The fruit is a favourite with children but is not grown commercially.

