

Myrica salicifolia

Myricaceae

Indigenous

- Common names: Chag: mfurukwe, mpache; **Hehe:** ndaita, mwefi; **Lugu:** kivumba; Maasai: olgetalasua; **Mate:** nkuguti; Pare: muangwi; **Samb:** mshegheshe.
- Ecology: A tree found in Kenya, Malawi, Zambia and Ethiopia, 1,600-3,300 m, and widespread on many mountain ranges in Tanzania above 1,200 m. Prefers shallow soils, heath and rocky areas.
- Uses: Firewood, timber (local carpentry only), medicine (leaves, seeds, roots, bark).
- Description: An evergreen shrub or much-branched tree up to 15 m high with a compact crown. BARK: dark grey, brown or black, smooth at first becoming rough, fissured and furrowed with age. Young twigs glandular and hairy. LEAVES: simple, alternate, up to 8.5 cm long, dark green above and pale green beneath with toothed margins, **dotted with golden glands, especially below**, giving a **spicy aromatic** smell when crushed. FLOWERS: small, yellow, fragrant and dotted with oil glands, male and female separate. FRUIT: On **a spike**, to **4 cm**, **each fruit berry-like** and round, very small, **purple with white waxy dots all over**.
- Propagation: Seedlings, root suckers.
- Seed info.: No. of seeds per kg: about 300,000. Germination is fast, but germination rate poor.
- treatment: treatment is not required.
- storage: can retain viability only for a short time (2 months) at room temperature.
- Management: Slow growing; coppicing.
- Remarks: The tree can easily be confused with young camphor (*Ocotea usambarensis*). Bark extracts are used to treat body pains and fatigue, and seeds and roots are used as an anthelmintic and to treat coughs. The wood is soft and light and of poor quality.

