

Newtonia hildebrandtii

Fabaceae (Mimosaceae)

Indigenous

COMMON NAMES: **Giriama:** Mbwaga zembe; **Kamba:** Mukame; **Malakote:** Muwarale; **Orma:** Mirole; **Samburu:** Elmugi, Lmuki; **Swahili:** Mgunga; **Tharaka:** Mukame.

DESCRIPTION: A tree to 25 m high with spreading crown.

BARK: Grey-brown, rough. **LEAVES:** Compound, with **4–7 pairs of pinnae**; leaflets in 6–19 pairs, elliptic up to 1 cm long. **FLOWERS:** Cream or yellow, in **spikes 4–12 cm long**. Leaflets in 6–19 pairs. **FRUIT:** A dark reddish brown leathery pod up to 28 cm long. Seeds brownish, winged.

ECOLOGY: In Kenya, mainly concentrated at the coast, most of Eastern Province and Samburu District. Common in the dry parts of Machakos, Makueni and Taita-Taveta Districts such as in Kibwezi Forest, Tsavo National Park and along the Voi–Mombasa Road. Mainly found in bushland, but more common in riverine conditions in the dry areas. The tree does not extend very near the coast, 100–1,000 m. Agroclimatic Zones IV–VI.

USES: Firewood, posts (for houses), charcoal, carvings, medicine (roots).

PROPAGATION: Seedlings.

SEED: Trials indicate that germination is poor.

REMARKS: Excellent fuelwood and high-quality charcoal. It is being over-exploited by charcoal burners in Kibwezi and Mwingi. A related species, *N. erlangeri* (**Boni:** Tuari; **Pokomo:** Mukami; **Wardei:** Gesi reebu), is a large tree restricted to lower parts of Tana River and in Lamu and Garissa Districts in low lying bushland and riverine areas. It is common in Boni Forest. Leaves have 1–4 pairs of pinnae. It is a locally important tree used for firewood and building.

FURTHER READING: Beentje, 1994; Kokwaro, 1993; Palgrave and Palgrave, 2002; van Wyk, 1993.

