

Indigenous

Ar: *Zeitun bari*

Bl: *Wekhora*

Eng: *African wild olive*

Sh: *Aulaeto*

Tg: *Awliie*

Tr: *Wegre*

**Ecology:** A widely distributed tree in dry forest and at forest margins in East Africa and Ethiopia, often with *Juniperus procera*. It reaches southern Africa, also India and China, and can range from a tall tree to a stunted shrub. It does best in good forest soil, but is hardy and drought-resistant once established, even in poor soils. In Eritrea, it is found throughout the country, most frequently between 900 and 2,500 m, and is dominant along the eastern escarpment from Mt. Soira in the south to the northern tip of Mt. Hager.

**Uses:** **Firewood**, charcoal, **poles**, posts, **timber** (furniture, carving, floors, panelling), medicine (stem, bark, leaves), bee forage, **milk flavouring** (smoking wood), toothbrushes (twigs), **walking sticks**.

**Description:** A handsome evergreen tree, 10-15 m, with a rounded crown and **grey-green** foliage, trunk often crooked and with **characteristic pockets**. **BARK:** Rough dark brown, **white branchlets, dotted with breathing pores**. **LEAVES:** **Stiff, narrowly oval, sharply pointed in opposite pairs, underside pale to white**, midrib prominent, to 8 cm, stalk very short. **FLOWERS:** Small, white, in branched heads to 5 cm. **FRUIT:** **Oval, fleshy to 1 cm, purple** and bitter-sweet when ripe but edible. Seed about 1 cm long.

**Propagation:** Wildings, seedlings (difficult to raise).

**Seed:** The species is a poor seeder. Low germination rate, 20-60 %. No. of seeds per kg: about 14,000.

**treatment:** Not necessary for fresh seed. Soak old seed in water for 48 hours. Breaking the seed cover with great care has resulted in good germination.

**storage:** Seed can be stored for about two months in air-tight containers.

**Management:** Slow growing, pollarding.

**Remarks:** The species used to be known by its synonym *Olea africana*. Fruits do not produce olive oil. The wood produces a fierce heat on burning. Olive poles are very durable in the ground.

