

*Olea europaea* subsp. *africana* (*O. africana*)

*Oleaceae*

Indigenous

- Common names: Arusha: ol orien; Chag: mlamuru, msenefu, mtamioi; Eng: brown olive, wild olive; Fiome: sahhati; Hehe: mhagati, muhagati; Iraqw: hlanmo, sahati; Maasai: ol orien; Menz loriene; Nguu: mamala; Pare: muranganji; Samb: mziaghembe, mzilaghembe; Zigua: muhagati.
- Ecology: Widely distributed in dry forest and forest margins in East Africa, 700-3,000 m. Ranging from a stunted shrub to a tall tree, it does well in good forest soil. It is hardy and tolerant to drought once established. In Tanzania it is mainly found in the drier mountain areas of Usa, Kilimanjaro, Pare and Mbulu.
- Uses: Firewood, charcoal, timber (furniture, carving), flooring, panelling, medicine (stems, bark, leaves), bee forage, milk flavouring (smoky wood), toothbrushes (twigs), walking sticks.
- Description: A handsome tree 10-15 m, with a rounded crown and grey-green foliage, trunk often crooked 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, the midrib prominent, to 8 cm. FLOWERS: small, white, in branched heads to 5 cm. FRUIT: oval, fleshy to 1 cm, green then purple when ripe, edible but bitter-sweet. The single seed is about 1 cm long.
- Propagation Seed info.: Wildings, seedlings (although difficult to raise). No. of seeds per kg: 13,000-16,000. The tree seeds only periodically and seed has a low germination rate. Ideally 20-60% in 20-45 days.
- treatment: not necessary for fresh seeds. For stored seed, soak in cold water for 48 hours or crack the seed coat taking care not to damage the seed inside.
- storage: the seed can be stored for about 2 months unless specially dried and cooled.
- Management: Slow growing.
- Remarks: The dense, heavy wood produces a fierce heat on burning and burns slowly. Olive poles are very durable in the ground. Unfortunately the fruit does not produce olive oil but farmers should be encouraged to grow this useful tree.

