

Pandanus kirkii**Pandanaceae****Indigenous**

STANDARD/TRADE NAMES: Screwpine.

COMMON NAMES: **Digo:** Mkapu; **English:** Screwpine; **Giriama:** Mkadi; **Sanya:** Mkadi; **Swahili:** Mkadi; **Tharaka:** Muriira.

DESCRIPTION: A coastal tree 4–8 m tall with **up to 2-m high aerial (stilt) roots** at the base of the trunk to anchor the tree in the sand. **BARK:** Pale brown to grey. **LEAVES:** Strap-like, **clasping at base**, up to 90 x 5 cm, **margins and midribs spiny**, in stiff terminal whorls. **FLOWERS:** Male and female separate on the same plant; male very small, white and fragrant, in hanging spikes up to 10 cm long, concealed by the leafy bracts; female spikes greenish and smaller. **FRUIT:** **Cone-like**, 30 cm long, yellowish to red or orange when ripe.

ECOLOGY: Found in Kenya and Tanzania only on the sand just above the high-water mark, often in association with casuarinas and coconut palms. Agroclimatic Zones I–V.

USES: Medicine (flowers, roots), fibres (leaves used for baskets and mats), ornamental, windbreak.

PROPAGATION: Produces suckers that can be used for planting.

MANAGEMENT: None

REMARKS: The fragrant flowers can be put in coconut milk to give it a nice scent.

P. rabaiensis (**Digo:** Mkapu; **Duruma:** Mukurasa; **Giriama:** Mkaraza; **Swahili:** Msanaka) is another species found on the coast near Mombasa and on the south coast along streams, near creeks and in swampy areas. Fruits are said to be edible. It is generally taller than *P. kirkii*, up to 20 m, and also has stilt roots. This is a genus with hundreds of members, mainly occurring in Asia and the Indian Ocean islands, including Madagascar. They are generally used as ornamentals, in basketry, for making hats, mats, for thatch and flavouring food (leaves).

FURTHER READING: Beentje, 1994; Dharani, 2002; Noad and Birnie, 1989.

