

Pappea capensis

Sapindaceae

Indigenous

Tg: Tishbealalito, Areragud

Tr: Melhat

Ecology: A tree widely distributed at medium to high altitudes in drier forest, savannah and open woodland, often among rocks. It grows in Acacia and Combretum-Terminalia woodland throughout eastern Africa to South Africa. In Eritrea, it is common in the central and northern highlands and on the eastern escarpment, e.g. at Gheleb, Mensa, Mt. Seled, Mt. Embasoira and on the Ala plains, 1,700-2,600 m.

Uses: **Firewood, withies** (house construction), fodder.

Description: A small, leafy, semi-deciduous tree, to 6 m, with a short trunk branching low down and a spreading rounded crown. **BARK:** Pale to dark grey, smooth, with horizontal markings. **LEAVES:** Distinctive, **oblong 4-12 cm, usually in terminal clusters**, dull green, **stiff and wavy, the edge sometimes spine-toothed**, base rounded to a stalk to 2 cm. **FLOWERS:** Tiny, **green-yellow on spikes to 12 cm**, male flowers at the tip, female at the base of the spike. **FRUIT:** Round, **furry yellow-green capsules** about 1 cm across, split to reveal a **bright orange-red jelly (the aril)** covering the **shiny black seeds**. This juicy flesh is acid but edible.

Propagation: Seedlings, wildings.

Seed:

treatment: Not required.

storage: Can be stored up to a year if kept cool.

Management: Pollarding.

Remarks: The leaves are considered good fodder in arid areas. The bark has been used as an emetic and oil from the seeds has various medicinal uses, e.g. as a purgative and to treat ringworm.

