

***Pavetta crassipes***

Rubiaceae

**Indigenous**

**COMMON NAMES:** **Kamba:** Munyeny, Muvembe; **Luhya (Bukusu):** Kumupepenambusi; **Luo:** Jathohonda, Mikumi, Rabuor.

**DESCRIPTION:** A deciduous shrub or, more rarely, a tree up to 7 m high with an **irregular shape and stout branches.**

**BARK:** Grey-black, cracking and peeling. **LEAVES:** Opposite or in whorls of 3–4, clustered at the end of branches, entire, narrowly elliptic, 12–20 cm long, light green, leathery and without hairs. **FLOWERS:** On leafless branches, creamy-white, fragrant, many together. **FRUIT:** Black, small and round, up to 8 mm in diameter.

**ECOLOGY:** Found in wooded grassland and open woodland. Drought resistant. Agroclimatic Zones II–V. Flowers in April–June and fruits in September–November in Bungoma.

**USES:** Fodder, bee forage, medicine (leaves and root).

**PROPAGATION:** Seedlings.

**MANAGEMENT:** Coppices, but not very well.

**REMARKS:** There are close to 20 *Pavetta* species in Kenya, and several hundreds in the Old World tropics. They are easily recognized from their leaves, which usually have nitrogen-fixing bacteria nodules on them appearing as pale dots or stripes. The more common ones are the following. *P. abyssinica* (**Kamba:** Munyeny, Muvembe; **Kikuyu:** Mwathathia, Muhurangware; **Kipsigis:** Belbeliet; **Luhya (Bukusu):** Kumupepenambusi; **Luo:** Jathohonda, Mikumi, Rabuor; **Marakwet:** Jeptabirirwa; **Tugen:** Kipkonorowa) is mainly a forest species but occasionally found in forest remnants. Found from western Kenya to Taita Hills and Marsabit District; 1,500–2,600 m. Leaves are often hairless and dry to a black colour. Fruit black, to 1 cm across. *P. gardeniifolia* (**Kamba:** Mwithongoi; **Kipsigis:** Chorlwet; **Maasai:** Olpiron; **Turkana:** Etoboka) has leaves that are usually hairless and green when dry. Stems are used as firesticks. It is found in bushland as well as dry forests. It is common in Machakos and Kajiado Districts and north in Isiolo, Laikipia and Samburu Districts. Larger stems are used for building. *P. oliverana* (**Kipsigis:** Kobetiotabosnet; **Maasai:** Olbungo; **Marakwet:** Kipchochin, Terwech; **Turkana:** Ekwanget) is a shrub to 3 m, mainly found in the western part of Kenya in a variety of habitats. Young stems are angular and leaves are densely hairy beneath.

**FURTHER READING:** Backes and Ahenda, 1998; Beentje, 1994; Kokwaro, 1993.

