

# Prunus persica

*Rosaceae*

China, South-West Asia

- Common names: Eng: peach; **Samb:** mfyoksi.
- Ecology: A small fruit tree of temperate climates, so in Tanzania it is grown in homesteads of the highland areas like the Uluguru Mountains, 1,000-2,000 m. It will also grow in quite dry soils.
- Uses: Firewood, food (fruit), ornamental, boundary marking.
- Description: A shrub or small tree up to 8 m with well-branched crown, normally pruned in cultivation. BARK: grey and smooth, young twigs angular and red. LEAVES: narrow **oval**, alternate, 6-15 cm long, smooth and with **finely toothed** margins, paler below with raised midrib, shortly stalked. FLOWERS: usually solitary, **5 pink petals** surround central stamens; abundantly produced when the tree is leafless. FRUIT: round and fleshy, yellowish when ripe, to 7 cm across, the skin covered with **short hairs** which rub off. Inside a hard **pitted stone** contains a single seed.
- Propagation: Seedlings, cuttings, grafting, wildings.
- Seed info.: No. of seeds per kg: 200-250. Germination is good but takes up to 6 weeks.
- treatment: not necessary, but soaking in cold water for 12 hours enhances germination.
- storage: can retain viability up to a year at room temperature.
- Management: A fast-growing tree; grown in fruit gardens and around *home compounds and on farmlands*. Pollarding to encourage branching. Shoots of one year bear fruit the following year, so pruning has to be done accordingly.
- Remarks: The tree can produce large quantities of small rather hard fruit which are eaten raw or cooked. A fungus, "peach curl", affects the leaves.

