

***Rhoicissus tridentata***

Vitaceae

**Indigenous**

**COMMON NAMES:** **Digo:** Munwa madzi; **Kamba:** Kivosya nguguu; **Kikuyu:** Mutumutua; **Kipsigis:** Dorodwet; **Kisii:** Omonyambeche, Egesanga; **Luhya (Bukusu):** Kumukoyakoye; **Luo:** Bwombwe liech; **Maasai:** Olkilenyeyi; **Marakwet:** Iwambova, Torotwa; **Pokot:** Taratwo; **Taita:** Mgerugeru.

**DESCRIPTION:** A shrub to 1.5 m or a climber to 9 m with **tendrils** that are opposite the leaves. **BARK:** Brownish in old parts. **LEAVES:** Divided into **3 leaflets** with a toothed edge, always **hairy**, more so on the underside. **FLOWERS:** Reddish brown, small, in lax groups of flowers whose growing points are each in turn terminated by a flower; petals about 3 mm. **FRUIT:** Small, black, round, 10–15 mm, many seeded, purple-black when ripe.

**ECOLOGY:** Found in East and Central Africa south to South Africa. Widely distributed in Kenya in wooded grassland and moist bushland, usually on rocky hillsides, also in drier forest margins, 0–2,250 m. Agroclimatic Zones II–III.

**Uses:** Edible fruit, medicine (roots, sap), rope (stems), live fence.

**PROPAGATION:** Seeds.

**MANAGEMENT:** The plant has tendrils and requires something to climb and hook on. Stake the plants, or plant them where there are other plants to climb on.

**REMARKS:** *R. revoilii* (**Kipsigis:** Tarotuet; **Luo:** Bumwe, Ochog dhok, Rabong'o; **Swahili:** Mgongolo) is distinguished by its leaflets whose edges are not toothed. The species is widely distributed in Kenya. It has more or less similar uses as *R. tridentata*.

**FURTHER READING:** Backes and Ahenda, 1998; Beentje, 1994; Bekele-Tesemma et al., 1993; Kokwaro, 1993; Palgrave and Palgrave, 2002.

