

Salvadora persica

Salvadoraceae

Indigenous

- Common names:** Eng: toothbrush tree; Cogo: mkunghuni; Goro: msaki; Hehe: mswake; Iraqw: mswaki; Maasai: olremit; Mbug: modee; Mwera: chigombo; Samb: mswaki; Sangu: mswake; Suku: mswake, muche; Swah: mswaki; Zigua: mswaki.
- Ecology:** Widespread all over arid Africa and in the driest parts of India. It grows in all districts of Tanzania in thorn shrub, on desert floodplains and grassy savannah and on alkaline soils, 0-1,350 m. It is very drought resistant and is an important indicator of saline soils even though it prefers the sandy-clay soils of water courses.
- Uses:** Firewood, food (fruit), medicine (roots), fodder (fruit, leaves), soil conservation, shade, toothbrushes.
- Description:** An evergreen trailing shrub or small tree, 3-7 m. Young flexible branches pendulous, older wood twisted. **BARK:** cracked and brown. **LEAVES:** yellow-green, dull, rather fleshy but hard with rough gland dots and raised veins, oblong to rounded to 5 cm. **FLOWERS:** in loose heads, to 10 cm, small, white. **FRUIT:** white, then pink to purple, 1 cm across, one seeded, juicy and strongly flavoured.
- Propagation:** Seedlings; sow seed in pots.
- Seed info.:** No. of seeds per kg: 31,000-37,000.
- treatment:** not necessary.
- storage:** seed can be stored for about one month.
- Management:** Slow growing.
- Remarks:** A very important fodder species for dry areas when nothing else is available as shoots can be browsed all year by cattle, sheep, goats and camels—but milk may be flavoured. The bark contains an antibiotic which keeps the mouth clean and helps to prevent tooth decay. A rough salt can be produced from the ash of the wood and leaves.

