

Schinus molle**Anacardiaceae****Peru, Andes**

COMMON NAMES: **English:** Pepper tree, Peruvian mastic; **Kikuyu:** Mubiribiri.

DESCRIPTION: A tree with attractive light weeping foliage to 15 m, the trunk short, the crown spreading. **BARK:** Dark brown, peeling; very sticky latex forms if the bark is damaged. **LEAVES:** Compound to 30 cm, many narrow leaflets to 7 cm, with a peppery smell if crushed. **FLOWERS:** Very small, green-yellow. **FRUIT:** Hanging on female trees, small round berries, green, turn to red then black.

ECOLOGY: An evergreen tree commonly planted in dry warm climates throughout the world and in most districts of Kenya; almost naturalized in places; 0–2,400 m. Tolerant of most soils including dry sand and black-cotton soil as well as alkaline and saline soils. Extremely drought resistant once established. Reaches maturity in less than 20 years. Termites are known to avoid areas near the tree. Agroclimatic Zones III–V. Flowering and seeding occur throughout the year.

USES: Firewood, charcoal, spices (from berries and leaves), medicine (leaves and bark), bee forage, shade, ornamental, avenue tree, soil conservation, latex, tannin, insect repellent.

PROPAGATION: Seedlings.

SEED: Germination rate 40–80%; 31,000–44,000 seeds per kg. Seeds are prone to insect attack.

treatment: Sun-dried fruits are pounded and winnowed to separate the seeds from the fruit pulp. Treatment before sowing is not necessary.

storage: Seed can be stored for long periods.

MANAGEMENT: A fast-growing tree. Pollarding, lopping and coppicing.

REMARKS: The tree should not be planted too close to buildings due to falling branches as the tree ages. It is shallow rooted and likely to be blown over. Pollarding is a good way of reducing this risk. The wood is termite resistant.

FURTHER READING: <http://www.worldagroforestrycentre.org/Sites/TreeDBS/AFT/AFT.htm>; Albrecht, 1993; Beentje, 1994; Bein et al., 1996; Bekele-Tesemma et al., 1993; Dharani, 2002; Fichtl and Adi, 1994; Katende et al., 1995; Mbuya et al., 1994; Noad and Birnie, 1989; Palgrave and Palgrave, 2002.

