

Sterculia appendiculata**Sterculiaceae****Indigenous****Standard/Trade name:** Mfuné.**COMMON NAMES:** **Digo:** Mfuné; **Giriama:** Mfuné; **Malakote:** Mufuno; **Orma:** Mafuno; **Pokomo:** Mfuno, Mufuné; **Sanya:** Wales; **Somali:** Munyangatta; **Swahili:** Mfuné, Msefu.

DESCRIPTION: A tall, straight deciduous tree up to 40 m high with a dense rounded crown. Trees have a clear bole, 15–20 m, and often emerge above the surrounding woodland. **BARK:** Pale yellow, smooth, conspicuous and powdery. Branchlets have dense rust-yellow hairs. **LEAVES:** At the end of branches, large, 14–30 cm across, the leaf blade divided into 3–7 lobes. Young leaves usually densely woolly with rusty hairs, lost at maturity. Leaf stalks over 6 cm, hairy at first. **FLOWERS:** Green–yellow–brown to 2.8 cm across in hairy few-flowered sprays to 12 cm, before leaves. **FRUIT:** Made up of 2–3 sections each to 9 cm covered with soft brown hairs on the outside. When opened, seeds line the edges, each 2 cm long, brown with a soft yellow aril at the base.

ECOLOGY: A tree of coastal and riverine forests, abandoned homesteads, coastal bushland, woodland and coral rag, at low altitudes from Kenya to South Africa. In Kenya, found in lower parts of Tana River and the rest of the coastal areas below 400 m. Agroclimatic Zones V–VII. Flowers in March and seeds in September at the coast.

USES: Timber, carvings, walking sticks, veneer, edible seeds, medicine (roots, bark, leaves), shade, ornamental.

PROPAGATION: Seedlings.

SEED: 12,000–15,000 seeds per kg. Germination is good, up to 60% and completed in 20 days.

treatment: Not necessary.

storage: Remains viable up to 2 months at room temperature.

MANAGEMENT: A fast-growing tree. Needs protection from fire.

REMARKS: The timber is soft and perishable. Bark and leaves are used for medicinal purposes by the Digo. Often left in farmland at the coast. A tree associated with many myths. The trunk has a very smooth bark. Said to be difficult even for monkeys and baboons to climb.

FURTHER READING: Beentje, 1994; Kokwaro, 1993; Mbuya et al., 1994; Palgrave and Palgrave, 2002; Ruffo et al., 2002.

