

Indigenous

Eng: Waterberry

Tg: Liham

Tr: Kurareas

- Ecology:** A large tree widely distributed throughout east, central and southern Africa. There are several subspecies occurring from sea level to 2,100 m. It prefers moist soils with a high watertable beside rivers, but will also grow in open woodland. Although seen at lower elevations in Eritrea, it is more common in the midlands, e.g. in the Kuruh valley and around Mutsub, Kenafena, Mai-edaga and Aini-mereb, 1,300-2,100 m.
- Uses:** **Firewood**, charcoal, **poles**, **timber** (furniture, general construction, tool handles, carving), **food** (fruit), bee forage, medicine (bark, roots, leaves), dyes, tannin (bark).
- Description:** A densely leafy forest tree, usually 10-15 m but up to 25 m, the trunk broad and fluted and the crown rounded and heavy, the branchlets drooping, the stems thick and angular. **BARK:** Smooth when young, black and rough with age, flaking, producing a red watery sap if cut. **LEAVES:** Young leaves purple-red, but mature leaves dark green, **in opposite pairs, shiny and smooth on both surfaces, the tip long but rounded, on a short grooved stalk.** The leaves are variable in shape. **FLOWERS:** White, showy stamens, in dense branched heads 10 cm across, the **honey-sweet smell** attracting many insects; **stalks angular, square.** **FRUIT:** Oval to 3 cm, purple-black and shiny, one-seeded, in big bunches of 20-30.
- Propagation:** Seedlings, wildings, direct sowing.
- Seed:** Good germination. No. of seeds per kg: 2,400-3,700.
- treatment:** Not necessary.
- storage:** Must be sown immediately the fruit is picked. Seeds may be spoilt in less than 24 hours.
- Management:** Pollarding, coppicing.
- Remarks:** The wood is brown, hard and strong. It is easily worked but liable to split. It has been reported that camels become sick if they eat the fruits.

