

Syzygium guineense

Myrtaceae

Indigenous**STANDARD/TRADE NAME:** Mshiwi.

COMMON NAMES: **Boran:** Kada; **Digo:** Muziahi; **English:** Guinea waterberry; **Kamba:** Kivuena, Muvueni; **Kikuyu:** Mukoe, Ngoe (fruit); **Kipsigis:** Lamaiyat; **Luhya (Bukusu):** Kumusitole (plant), Busitole (fruit); **Luhya (Tachoni):** Obusitole (fruit), Omusitole (plant); **Maasai:** Oleragai (Narok), Olairagai; **Marakwet:** Lemaiyua; **Mbeere:** Mukui, Muriru; **Meru:** Muriru; **Nandi:** Limaiyua, Lamayuet; **Pokot:** Lomaiwo, Lamaiyua; **Sabaot:** Lemaiyua, Reberwo; **Samburu:** Lairakai, Lamulii, Leperei; **Swahili:** Mzuari, Mzambarau; **Taita:** Msu, Mkongo; **Taveta:** Mase; **Tugen:** Lomoiwo, Lamaek (fruit), Lamaywet (plant).

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**, branchlets drooping, 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, **opposite, 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.

ECOLOGY: A large forest tree with a wide distribution in Africa and with several subspecies. Occurs from coastal areas of Kenya to 2,100 m, requiring rainfall of over 1,000 mm a year. It prefers moist soils with a high water table, but will also grow in open woodland. Agroclimatic Zones II–III. Flowers in March–June and fruits in May–July in Bungoma.

USES: Firewood, charcoal, timber, poles, posts, tool handles, edible fruit, medicine (bark and roots), bee forage, tannin, dye.

PROPAGATION: Direct sowing at site (best method), wildings, seedlings (sow seeds in pots).

SEED: Good germination; 2,400–3,700 seeds per kg.

treatment: Not necessary, but remove flesh and wash in water before sowing.

storage: Seed cannot be stored (recalcitrant) and should not be dried.

MANAGEMENT: Pollarding, coppicing. Demands light.

REMARKS: The wood is brown, hard and strong. It is easily worked but liable to split. The bark has been reported to be poisonous. Smoke from the burning wood can be used to season milk containers.

FURTHER READING: <http://www.worldagroforestrycentre.org/Sites/TreeDBS/AFT/AFT.htm>; Albrecht, 1993; Backes and

Ahenda, 1998; Beentje, 1994; Bein et al., 1996; Bekele-Tesemma et al., 1993; Dharani, 2002; Fichtl and Adi, 1994; Katende et al., 1995, 1999; Kokwaro, 1993; Maundu et al., 1999; Mbuya et al., 1994; Noad and Birnie, 1989; Palgrave and Palgrave, 2002; Ruffo et al., 2002; Sommerlatte and Sommerlatte, 1990; Storrs, 1979; van Wyk, 1993.

