

Syzygium owariense

Myrtaceae

Indigenous

Common names: **English:** Water berry.

Ecology: A tree of swamp forests, stream banks, riverine thicket and woodland along streams at higher altitudes from South Africa, Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique and into West Africa. In Uganda, it grows in wooded grassland and semi-arid woodland preferring stony ground and hills. It is common in Mt. Kei and Otze Forest Reserves. In Kapchorwa District, it is sometimes associated with *Syzygium cordatum* and *Flacourtia indica*.

Uses: Firewood, charcoal, food (fruit), bee forage.

Description: A semi-deciduous multi-stemmed shrub or small tree up to 8 m, erect branches to a **bushy rounded crown**. **BARK:** grey, **thick, smooth at first** becoming dark grey, rough and flaking with age. **LEAVES:** opposite, blue-green, **thick, leathery**, smooth and shiny, about 10 cm long, **leaf tip long pointed** but blunt, **pink-yellow midrib, clear below**, leaf stalk pink-red, aromatic when crushed. **FLOWERS:** creamy white or **pink** with numerous stamens, sweet scented, **in heads to 15 cm across**, on angular square stalks. **FRUIT:** oblong and fleshy, **about 1.5 cm long and 1 cm thick**, green at first, purple then black when ripe, containing **1 seed**.

Propagation Seedlings (sow seed in pots), suckers; direct sowing on site.

Seed: No. of seeds per kg: about 400. Germination is very good: up to 90% after 30 days,

treatment: not necessary.

storage: retain viability for only a day.

Management: Coppicing, pollarding.

Remarks: Can be planted in semi-arid areas. It is said to be the best *Syzygium* species for honey. The leaves and fruit contain the essential oil eugenol which has been used for flavouring food (Guinea "cloves").

