

***Terminalia mollis***

## Combretaceae

**Indigenous**

**COMMON NAMES:** **Luhya:** Olokhongwe; **Luhya (Bukusu):** Kumukhongwe; **Luo:** Opok.

**DESCRIPTION:** A medium to large tree up to 15 m high, rarely with a straight trunk. Crown tapering to oval, no layered appearance. Dense foliage and an intense shade, but deciduous. **BARK:** Grey-black, fissured. **LEAVES:** Spirally arranged, elliptic or obovate, large, up to 37 cm long and up to 19 cm wide, slightly hairy above, **densely hairy beneath**. **FLOWERS:** White-cream, in 8–17-cm long spikes from the leaf axils. **FRUIT:** Winged, yellow green, up to 12 cm long and 5.5 cm wide.

**ECOLOGY:** Found in West Africa from Ghana east through Cameroon to south Sudan and south to Angola and Zambia. In Kenya, restricted to western parts around Lake Victoria, Kakamega, Bungoma, Trans Nzoia and adjoining areas in open woodland and wet savanna, on rocky hillsides and often left in cultivated fields. Resistant to drought, fire and termites once established. The tree is becoming rare due to charcoal burning and over-exploitation. Agroclimatic Zone II. Flowers in February–March and fruits in October–December in Bungoma.

**USES:** Firewood, charcoal, timber, furniture, posts, tool handles, wheels for ox-carts, medicine (roots), mulch, soil improvement, ceremonial.

**PROPAGATION:** Wildings, seedlings. The species has a high natural reproduction ability and wildings can easily be collected in cultivated land or grazing land.

**SEED:** Large seed with 2 wings typical of many *Terminalia*.

**treatment:** Remove wings and soak in cold water overnight.

**storage:** Can be stored for some time if kept free from insects.

**MANAGEMENT:** Lopping and pollarding; prolific but slow growth.

**REMARKS:** *T. mollis* has abundant litter fall and good mulch quality. It grows well with all crops and is highly appreciated as a tree for intercropping.

**FURTHER READING:** Backes and Ahenda, 1998; Beentje, 1994; National Academy of Sciences, 1980; Palgrave and Palgrave, 2002; Storrs, 1979.

