

Tetradenia riparia

Labiatae

Indigenous

COMMON NAMES: **Kamba:** Kyooya kyovai; **Luo:** Okita lang'o; **Maasai:** Oring-lagaldes; **Marakwet:** Lonwa; **Pokot:** Lonuo; **Samburu:** Ngeliot.

DESCRIPTION: An erect **semi-succulent, strongly aromatic bush** or small tree to 3 m, stems often knobably with leaf scars and densely hairy. The leaves have an unpleasant smell. **BARK:** Light grey-brown, smooth but peeling with age. **LEAVES:** Opposite and simple, wide ovate to 9 cm, **very soft due to dense, short green hairs both sides**, veins clear below, often sticky, the **edge coarsely round-toothed**, base rounded to a stalk about 2 cm. **FLOWERS:** **Very tiny, mauve-pink-white**, quite attractive, in large, dense, much-branched heads to 30 cm long. Flowers grow on spikes, male and female on different plants. **FRUIT:** A very small nutlet.



ECOLOGY: A common African shrub, extending to South Africa; locally common in dry rocky bushland, at forest margins and often near water. In Uganda, it is valued and cultivated for its medicinal uses. Agroclimatic Zones IV–V.

USES: Flavouring, seasoning, medicine (roots, leaves), soil conservation, live fence.

PROPAGATION: Vegetatively by division of bushes or use of cuttings.

SEED: Not used for propagation.

MANAGEMENT: Fast growing; coppicing and side trimming as a fence.

REMARKS: A good additive to meat. Can be used to marinate meat and can be added to raw blood to improve taste (Maasai). The plant is also effective in controlling soil erosion.

FURTHER READING: Beentje, 1994; Kokwaro, 1993.

