

Indigenous

**Bl:** Kota**Eng:** Cape mahogany**Sh:** Assurto**Tg:** Gumeh**Tr:** Kuota

**Ecology:** An important tree of high forest throughout tropical Africa and also found in riverine savannah. It prefers well-drained rich soil. In Eritrea, it is found mainly at the foot of the eastern escarpment, e.g. around Filfil, Solomuna, Ela-ero, Mutsab, Ghinda and the lower Anseba river (Daarit), 450-1,450 m. It also occurs at the foot of and on the western escarpment, 450-1,350 m.

**Uses:** Firewood, **poles, timber** (furniture, tool handles, boats), medicine (leaves, bark, roots, oil), ornamental, **shade**, windbreak, river-bank stabilization, oil/soap (seed).

**Description:** An evergreen tree, 15-30 m, with **dark hanging foliage**, pyramid-shaped when young, later the **crown is rounded and heavy**, the trunk rather smooth. **BARK:** Grey-red-brown, finely grooved, later rough, scaling to show green underbark. **LEAVES:** Compound, **stalks and shoots softly hairy**, 4-5 pairs leaflets, thick and shiny, leaflets **increasing in size up to the largest central leaflet** which may be up to 16 cm long, **the midrib below continues into an unusual hairy tip**. Leaves dry green to pale brown, 11-18 pairs veins below are close together. **FLOWERS:** Inconspicuous, fragrant clusters, cream-green, 5 thick petals around a hairy centre of stamens. **FRUIT:** Round, red-brown hairy capsules to 3 cm across dry and split into 3-4 parts. **A clear neck to 1 cm long** connects the capsule to the fruit stalk. Up to 6 shiny black seeds hang out of the open capsules, each one almost covered by a soft orange-red aril.

**Propagation:** Seedlings, direct sowing at site, wildings.

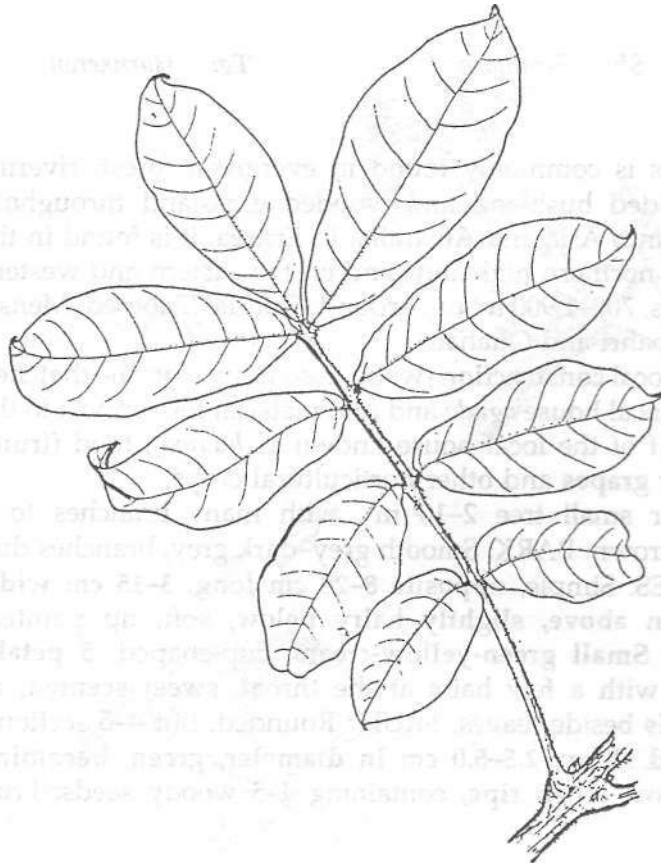
**Seed:** Sow fresh seed for best results. No. of seeds per kg: about 800.

**treatment:** Not necessary.

**storage:** Seeds lose viability quickly.

**Management:** Fairly fast growing.

**Remarks:** Seeds are extremely poisonous if eaten but they contain a useful oil. Leaves are said to have some soapy properties and could be exploited in soap manufacturing. The pink-grey-brown timber is very susceptible to insect attack.



open fruit capsule



seeds with aril

