

Trichilia emetica* (T. roka)*Meliaceae****Indigenous**

STANDARD/TRADE NAME: Trichilia.

COMMON NAMES: **Boran:** Anona; **Digo:** Munwa madzi; **English:** Cape mahogany; **Giriama:** Munwa madzi, Mgalana; **Kamba:** Mutuluku, Musambo; **Kikuyu:** Mururi; **Luhya:** Munyama, Musinzi, Irojo; **Luo:** Ochond athuth, Ochond rateng'; **Malakote:** Mufaate; **Marakwet:** Kurteswa; **Meru:** Mutuati; **Orma:** Soke; **Pokot:** Korteswa; **Samburu:** Ilberi; **Swahili:** Muwamaji, Mtimai; **Tharaka:** Mutuati; **Turkana:** Ekuyen.

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 of 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 brownish green to pale brown, 11–18 pairs of 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.

ECOLOGY: An important tree of high forest throughout tropical Africa and also found in riverine savanna. Widespread, often by rivers, in Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Tanzania, south to South Africa, 0–1,450 m. Prefers well-drained, rich soil and high groundwater. There is also a smaller savanna form with corky grey bark. Agroclimatic Zones II–V (riverine in dry areas).

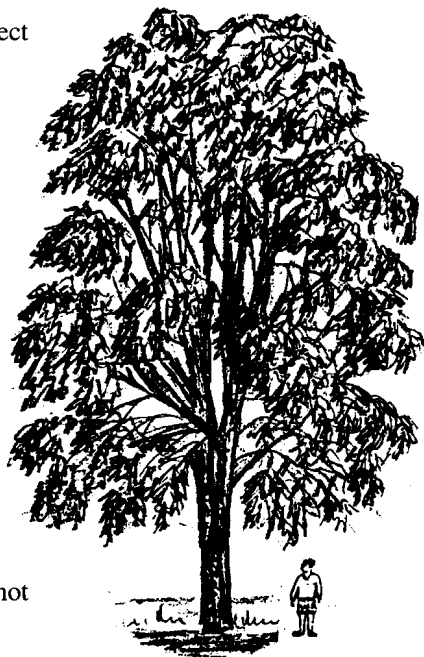
USES: Firewood, furniture, poles, posts, tool handles, carvings, boat building, medicine (bark and roots), fodder, bee forage, shade, ornamental, soil conservation, windbreak, veterinary medicine, oil (seeds), soap (leaves).

PROPAGATION: Seedlings, direct sowing at site, wildings, cuttings from 1-year-old coppice shoots. Also produces root suckers.

SEED: Collect capsules when they start opening, dry in the shade, shake out the seed. About 300 seeds per kg.

treatment: Remove the soft orange–red aril by maceration in water, then sow fresh seed for best results.

storage: Seeds lose viability quickly (recalcitrant) and should not be dried or stored.



MANAGEMENT: Fairly fast growing; pruning, pollarding, coppicing.

REMARKS: Seeds are extremely poisonous. The tree is highly regarded in central Kenya. Leaves have some soapy properties. The pink–grey–brown wood is light and used for furniture but it is very susceptible to insect attack. The seeds are crushed to produce an oil that is applied to beehives to prevent attack from wood borers and ants. The same oil is used by the Tharaka as a skin moisturizer. Beehives are often hung in the canopy of this tree, producing high-quality honey.

FURTHER READING: <http://www.worldagroforestrycentre.org/Sites/TreeDBS/AFT/AFT.htm>; Albrecht, 1993; Beentje, 1994; Bein et al., 1996; Bekele-Tesemma et al., 1993; Blundell, 1987; Dharani, 2002; ITDG and IRR, 1996; Kokwaro, 1993; Mbuya et al., 1994; Noad and Birnie, 1989; Palgrave and Palgrave, 2002; Ruffo et al., 2002; Storrs, 1979; van Wyk, 1993.

