

Uvaria scheffleri

Annonaceae

Indigenous

COMMON NAMES: **Chonyi:** Mudzaladowe; **Giriama:** Mdzaladowe, Mudzaladowe; **Kamba:** Mukukuma, Ngukuma (fruit), Kilali; **Kambe:** Mudzaladowe; **Keiyo:** Tamangesyat, Tamanges, Tamangesig; **Marakwet:** Malkach, Tomolokwo, Tamalak (plural), Malkatwa; **Pokot:** Tamrenwo, Mikisia, Mulakech; **Somali:** Mareer booy; **Tugen:** Tamingetwo.

DESCRIPTION: A scrambling shrub or liana to 5 m or more with long shoots, rarely standing on its own. Stems long, narrow, with short branches at right angles, young shoots extending out of the main bush. **BARK:** Dark brown on old bark, purplish black on branches. **LEAVES:** Long, narrow and glossy without hairs. **FLOWERS:** Borne singly opposite leaf; bud dull green or brown, golden yellow to cream or yellow. **FRUIT:** Divided into finger-like units (carpels), each to 5 cm long, green, ripening to bright yellow to orange-red. Seeds shiny brown, usually compressed on one side.

ECOLOGY: Found only in Kenya and northern Tanzania. In Kenya, e.g. in Karura Forest, Kibwezi, Namanga, Sigor, Ong'ata Rongai, Thui Hill (Makueni), Kitui Hills, Kerio Valley on rocky hillsides, bushland, thickets and at forest edges, where it is usually found climbing on other plants. Soils range from red clay to rocky, 900–1,800 m. Agroclimatic Zone III. Fruits all year round, more in August–September (Nairobi, Makueni, Kajiado) and less in February–March.

USES: Edible fruits, medicine, ornamental, material for weaving granaries (branches).

PROPAGATION: Seedlings.

MANAGEMENT: May be planted near fences and hedges to provide support; otherwise staking necessary.

REMARKS: Ripe fruits are edible, sweet and tasty. The seeds, which are enclosed in pulp, are sucked clean then discarded. The soft outer skin may also be eaten. Occasionally, a few of the seeds may be attacked by insect larvae (Kibwezi). A medicinal plant among the Kamba. Narrow stems flexible, used for weaving round structures like grain stores. Smoke from stem wood used for smoking milk gourds (Kamba). May be planted as an ornamental.

FURTHER READING: Beentje, 1994; Kokwaro, 1993; Maundu et al., 1999.

