

**Vangueria apiculata****Rubiaceae****Indigenous**

**COMMON NAMES:** **Boran:** Buruuri; **Digo:** Muvuma; **Kamba:** Mukomoa; **Kikuyu:** Mubiru; **Kipsigis:** Kimolwet; **Kisii:** Omokomoni, Ekomoni; **Luhya:** Shikomoli; **Luhya (Bukusu):** Kumukomosi kumusecha; **Luo:** Anyuka; **Maasai:** Olgumi, Ilgum (plural), Engumi eker; **Pokot:** Toperpirwo, Taparper; **Samburu:** Ikoromosyieoi; **Turkana:** Emaler.

**DESCRIPTION:** A deciduous shrub or small tree to 6 m.

**BARK:** Smooth grey-brown. **LEAVES:** **Thin and papery (no hairs)**, more or less oval, **the tip pointed, about 13 cm x 6 cm with 7–11 main veins** each side of the midrib, vein network clear below, stalk only 0.7 cm, stipules at nodes quite thin, 0.8 cm long. **FLOWERS:** Beside leaves, **green–white–yellow in much-branched bunches**, tiny, tubular. **FRUIT:** Green, becoming yellow-brown, **rounded 17–22 mm long**, edible.

**ECOLOGY:** A widespread species in evergreen forests, near water or in bushland from Ethiopia to Zimbabwe. In Kenya, e.g. at Chepararia (West Pokot), Loima Hills (Turkana), Homa Bay and Kisii in evergreen forest, riverine and wetland forests or in bushland or thickets, often on termite mounds and rocky outcrops, 900–2,500 m. Agroclimatic Zones III–IV. Fruits in July–August in West Pokot. Flowers in April–May and in October and fruits in July–September and November–December in Bungoma.

**USES:** Firewood, ornamental, shade, withies (for houses), utensils, edible fruit.

**PROPAGATION:** Direct sowing at site, wildings, seedlings.

**SEED:** Seed can be obtained after eating the fruit or collected where the fruits have fallen on the ground.

**treatment:** If fruits are collected they must be crushed and the seeds separated and cleaned from the pulp.

**storage:** Sow immediately after seeds are extracted from the fruit.

**MANAGEMENT:** Coppicing, pollarding.

**REMARKS:** This species has a bushy habit and therefore needs regular pruning. Intercrop with other fruit trees in cropland or plant as a backyard fruit tree. The glossy leaves make it a potential ornamental plant.

A related species is *V. volkensii* (syn. *V. linearisepala*) (**Kamba:** Mukomoa; **Keiyo:** Komoluet; **Kikuyu:** Mubiru, Mubiru ng'ombe; **Kipsigis:** Kimolwet, Kimolwet ne ming'in; **Luo:** Anyuka; **Maasai:** Olgumi; **Marakwet:** Komohro, Tabirirwo, Tabirir (plural); **Mbeere:** Mukomboiru (Nthawa), Mubiruiaru (Mavuria, Embu); **Meru:** Muiru; **Ogiek:** Mullet, Maldai; **Pokot:** Tapirpirwa; **Samburu:** Ngururusia, Ngururusi, Lgumi, Lmuldai (Mathew's Range); **Taveta:** Mdaria). This is a tree to 6 m high, often with arching branches at maturity. Leaves are velvety hairy. Flowers are pale greenish yellow, often with hairs on the throat of the corolla tube. The fruit is round, up to 3 cm in diameter, green turning brown on drying. This species is found in Ethiopia and Sudan south to Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. In Kenya it is found from Moyale and Mathew's Range in the north southwards to Taita-Taveta and west

to western Kenya. It occurs at evergreen forest margins, particularly with *Juniperus* and *Podocarpus*, in riverine forests and thickets and bushland. It is often found in rocky places and on termite mounds, 900–2,500 m. The fruit is sweet with an acid taste. The wood is hard and used for constructing small structures. Leaves are eaten by goats. It can be grown easily from seeds. Agroclimatic Zones II–IV. Flowers in March–April in Taita-Taveta, Machakos, Trans Nzoia and Kericho and fruits appear in August–September. Fruits in October in Kakamega and in December in Laikipia.

**FURTHER READING:** Backes and Ahenda, 1998; Beentje, 1994; Katende et al., 1995, 1999; Kokwaro, 1993; Maundu et al., 1999; Palgrave and Palgrave, 2002; Ruffo et al., 2002.

