

***Vepris nobilis* (Teclea nobilis)**

Rutaceae

Indigenous

COMMON NAMES: **Kikuyu:** Munderendu; **Kipsigis:** Kuriot; **Luhya:** Mutavo; **Luhya (Bukusu):** Kumutare; **Luo:** Odar (Siaya), Ondati (Migori), Midat, Achacho, Mid; **Maasai:** Olgelai; **Meru:** Muteratu; **Nandi:** Keriondet; **Ogiek:** Koriot; **Samburu:** L'gilai; **Tugen:** Kurionde.

DESCRIPTION: An evergreen shrub or tree 2–12 m, or taller in rainforest, with a crooked trunk and dark, spreading crown. **BARK:** Smooth, grey, with ring marks. **LEAVES:** Compound, **3 leaflets** on stalks to 6 cm, leaflets **dark shiny green**, 5–15 cm long, **tapering to the tip, edge wavy**, midrib stands out below, leaf stalks and branchlets **without hairs**. **FLOWERS:** Very small, **cream-yellow, fragrant**, in loose sprays to 12 cm. **FRUIT:** **Orange-red and smooth**, becoming wrinkled, very many on a branched stalk to 20 cm, each ovoid, pointed, 5–6 mm, containing one seed.

ECOLOGY: One of the largest trees in this genus, widely distributed in wet highland forests from Ethiopia to South Africa. Widely distributed in Kenya in wet highland forests, particularly in western Kenya, often with *Podocarpus* and *Juniperus*, but nowhere common. Found also in bushland and savanna, Nakuru, Baringo; 900–2,600 m. Agroclimatic Zones III. Flowers in January–March and fruits in March–July in Bungoma.

USES: Firewood, charcoal, timber, poles, posts, tool handles, spear shafts, bows, clubs, walking sticks, medicine (leaves, roots), veterinary medicine.

PROPAGATION: Seedlings, wildings.

SEED: Not a prolific seeder; about 20,000 seeds per kg. Low germination rate.

treatment: Not necessary.

MANAGEMENT: Moderate- to slow-growing; pruning, pollarding.

REMARKS: The wood is tough and pale, valued for its strength and durability. The tree can be grown in stands for timber and fuel.

A related species, *V. simplicifolia* (**Boran:** Nfike; **Digo:** Ndimu wa takani; **Kamba:** Mutui; **Kikuyu:** Munderendu; **Maasai:** Olgelai; **Samburu:** Ngela) has simple leaves to 15 cm, side veins parallel and clear above, leaf stalk grooved and jointed, over 1 cm, the fruit round, orange-red, attracting birds and monkeys. It is widespread in dry forest and woodland, usually riverine, 0–2,300 m. Agroclimatic Zones III. *V. simplicifolia* has been reported to be poisonous. Its wood is hard and durable; the uses are similar to that of *V. nobilis*.

FURTHER READING: Backes and Ahenda, 1998; Beentje, 1994; Bein et al., 1996; Bekele-Tesemma et al., 1993; Dharani, 2002; ITDG and IIRR, 1996; Katende et al., 1995; Kokwaro, 1993; Mbuya et al., 1994; Noad and Birnie, 1989; Palgrave and Palgrave, 2002; Sommerlatte and Sommerlatte, 1990.

