

Vitex doniana (V. cuneata, V. cienkowskii)

Verbenaceae

Indigenous

Common names: **Bond:** mgobe; **Eng:** black plum; **Fipa:** mchinka, mfuru, mufita; Gogo: mfulu; **Goro:** orrolmo; **Kere:** mukoronto; **Lugu:** mfuru, mkoga; **Mate:** mpitimbi; **Mwera:** mpindimbi; **Nguu:** mgobwe; Nyam: mfurulegea, mfuru ya mtoni, mpulu; Nyiha: mkunungu; **Rangi:** mpuru; **Samb:** mgobe; **Swah:** mfudu, mfuu; **Zara:** mfuru; **Zigua:** mgobe; **Zinza:** muvuru.

Ecology: A deciduous forest tree, widespread in East Africa, largely in coastal woodlands and savannah but also in riverine and low-altitude wetter areas, 0-1,800.

Uses: Firewood, charcoal, timber (construction, furniture), poles, food (fruit, leaves), fodder (leaves, fruit), bee forage, medicine (roots), shade, tannin, dye.

**Description:** A small or large tree, 8-14 m with a **heavy rounded crown** and a clear bole. **BARK:** pale brown or grey white, with long fissures and scales. **LEAVES:** **opposite and compound, digitate (like fingers), leathery** and shiny, each leaflet stalked to 22 cm long, tip rounded or notched, lower leaflets smaller. **FLOWERS:** fragrant, in dense bunches on a long stalk, to 12 cm across, each flower cream with one hairy violet lobe; the calyx enlarging to a hairy cup around the fruit. **FRUIT:** **oblong to 3 cm**, green marked with white dots, **black** when ripe, edible starchy pulp around the hard nut with 1-4 seeds, dispersed by monkeys.

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

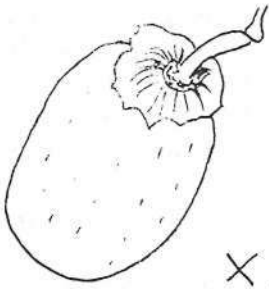
**Seed info.:** No. of nuts per kg: 1,000-1,100.

**treatment:** remove fleshy part of the fruit and soak nut in cold water for 24 hours.

**storage:** best sown fresh.

**Management:** Medium growth rate.

**Remarks:** The species regenerates naturally from seed and root suckers. Forest fires may help break the seed coat before germination. The tree produces a teak-like, termite-resistant timber and edible fruits which can be sold.



× 1

