

Indigenous

- Common names:** **Eng:** Meru oak; **Meru:** moru, muuru; **Swah:** mfuu.
- Ecology:** A valuable timber tree occurring in Kenya on the eastern slopes of Mt. Kenya, Meru District. Now planted elsewhere, e.g. in Tanzania on Mt. Kilimanjaro, 1,500-1,850 m. Locally common with *Commiphora eminii* on thicketed rocky hills in Shinyanga and Lake Victoria. It prefers deep sandy-loam soils.
- Uses:** Firewood, timber (furniture, veneer, panels), food (fruit), ornamental, mulch, windbreak.
- Description:** A tall deciduous tree up to 30 m high with a rounded crown and a clear straight bole. **BARK:** pale brown, with narrow vertical fissures, dark brown with age. **LEAVES:** **compound with 5 leaflets on long leaf stalks**, up to 25 cm long, leaflets light green above, pale green **and hairy beneath**. **FLOWERS:** small, in loose heads, about 1 cm long, creamy white, with one prominent mauve petal. **FRUIT:** rounded, about 1.5 cm across, green at first, becoming soft **and black** when ripe, the **hairy calyx remaining**. The inner nut usually has 1-2 seeds. Black fruit fall to the ground.
- Propagation:** Seedlings.
- Seed info.:** No. of seeds (nuts) per kg: about 3,000. Germination is low and sporadic, up to 40% after 9 weeks. Dry **Fruit**, then rub over a wire mesh to remove pulp. Dry in the shade.
- treatment:** not necessary, or soak in cold water for 24 hours.
- storage:** can retain viability for a long time if kept dry.
- Management:** A fairly fast-growing tree. Deciduous and produces a useful mulch of leaf litter. Coppicing.
- Remarks:** A useful tree for planting on a small scale on farms. **Can** also be grown in commercial plantations in humid **lower** highlands. The timber is hard and durable, very pale and similar to teak. The fruit are only eaten in emergency.

