

**Warburgia ugandensis**

Canellaceae

**Indigenous****STANDARD/TRADE NAME:** East African greenheart.

**COMMON NAMES:** **English:** East African greenheart; **Kikuyu:** Muthiga, Muthaiga; **Kipsigis:** Moissot, Sogoet, Soke; **Kisii:** Omenyakige; **Luhya:** Abaki, Apacha, Apachi; **Luhya (Bukusu):** Kumusikhu; **Luo:** Abaki, Soko; **Maasai:** Osokonoi, Osogonoi; **Marakwet:** Sekwan; **Meru:** Musunui; **Nandi:** Soget; **Ogiek:** Marut; **Tugen:** Sorget, Soke.

**DESCRIPTION:** An evergreen tree to 25 m with a dense leafy rounded canopy. **BARK:** **Rough** brown-black, cracked into rectangular scales. **LEAVES:** **Shiny dark green** above, midrib very clear below, **edge wavy**, to 10 cm long. **FLOWERS:** Inconspicuous, green to cream. **FRUIT:** Round to egg-shaped, to 5 cm long, on short stalks, green, turning to **purple on ripening**, surface white and waxy. Several flat, heart-shaped seeds inside a pulp.

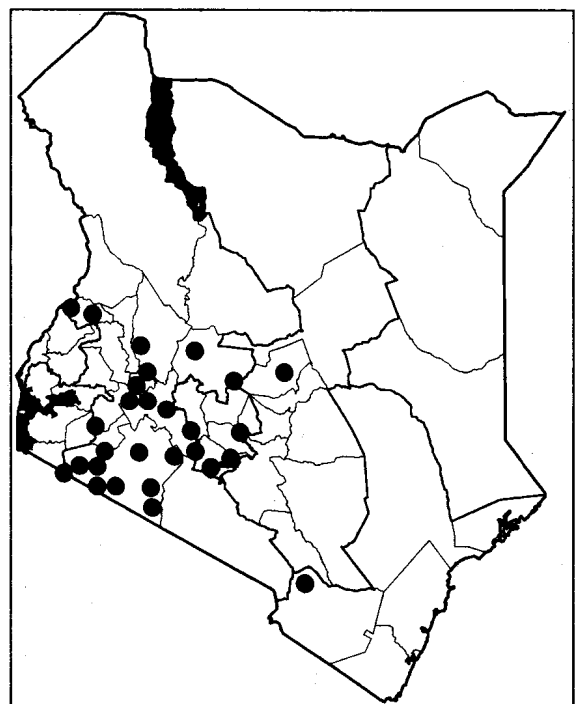
**ECOLOGY:** The natural range includes Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda and south to South Africa. Widely distributed in lower montane rainforest and drier highland forest areas. Also found in riverine forest and *Acacia xanthophloea* woodland, 1,600–2,400 m. Common around Nairobi, in Maasai Mara, Londiani, Kitale, Sotik, Kericho, Tugen Hills and south-west of Mt Kenya. Agroclimatic Zone III.

**USES:** Firewood, timber, furniture, tools, seasoning (leaves in curries), soup (roots), edible fruit, medicine (bark and roots), toothbrushes, shade, ornamental, mulch, resin, veterinary medicine, insecticide.

**PROPAGATION:** Seedlings, direct sowing at site, wildings, cuttings.

**SEED:** About 10,500 seeds per kg. Timing of seed collection is important since fruit that has fallen to the ground rot easily. The ripe fruit is collected from the tree or shaken off the branches and collected from the ground.

**treatment:** Extract and sow seeds fresh for best results. Germination may be within 15 days. Germination rate good, usually over 70%.



## ***Warburgia ugandensis* (cont)**

**MANAGEMENT:** Fairly fast growing in the right conditions; coppicing.

**REMARKS:** After seasoning the heartwood develops a slight greenish colour, which fades with exposure to light. The wood, though hard and heavy, rots quickly and does not resist termites. It has a high content of oil. This is one of the leading medicinal plants, now under extreme pressure from prospectors of herbal medicine. The leaves and twigs of the tree have a peppery taste. The heartwood contains chemical compounds that discourage armyworms from feeding. The resin is used as glue.

A related species, *W. stuhlmannii* (Swahili: Mkaa), is a rare tree of dry coastal forests and wooded grassland. It may grow to 24 m. The fruit and flowers are smaller. The plant is also used for medicine. This species is endemic to parts of Tanzania and the Kenyan coast, e.g.

Kaembeni-Dida in Kilifi District, and also near Kinango in Kwale District. *W. salutaris* occurs in southern Africa.

**FURTHER READING:** <http://www.worldagroforestrycentre.org/Sites/TreeDBS/AFT/AFT.htm>; Albrecht, 1993; Backes and Ahenda, 1998; Beentje, 1994; 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.

