

Ximenia caffra (X. americana var. caffra)

*Olacaceae*

Indigenous

**Common names:** **Bara:** maanyangu; **Bena:** mpingipingi; **Bende:** msantu; **Eng:** large sourplum; **Gogo:** mtundwe; **Goro:** maanyangu, maanyangumo; **Hehe:** mtundwa; **Iraqw:** maanyangu; **Maasai:** lama; **Nyam:** mnembwa, mtundwa; **Nyat** mutundwe; **Nyir:** mtundwi; **Rangi:** mjingu; **Sand:** xaya; **Swah:** mpingi; **Zara:** muhingi; **Zigua:** mtundwi.

**Ecology:** This small tree grows in woodlands and wooded grasslands, especially on rocky hillsides and termite mounds, 5-2,000 m. In Tanzania it occurs in all regions except highlands. It is also found in Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, southwards to South Africa.

**Uses:** Poles, tool handles, utensils (spoons), medicine (leaves, roots), bee forage.

**Description:** A shrub or, more commonly, a tree up to 8 m armed with small spines. **Young stems can be very hairy.** **BARK:** grey, grey-brown or black, smooth at first, then rough and fissured when old. **LEAVES:** simple, alternate, 2.5-6.0 cm long, **densely hairy at first** and becoming **shiny dark green**, smooth when mature, on a short stalk. **FLOWERS:** **solitary or in bunches from the same point**, small, white-green, sometimes pink to red around the hairy throat. **FRUIT:** oval, about 2.5 cm long, greenish when young then soft, edible and **bright red when ripe** containing one woody seed. The flavour is best when over-ripe.

**Propagation:** Seedlings, suckers.

**Seed info.:** No. of seeds per kg: 700-1,200. Germination very good and fast for fresh seed,

**treatment:** not necessary.

**storage:** Sow fresh seeds for good germination rate. Viability is lost within 3 months.

**Management:** Pruning, coppicing.

**Remarks:** A tree with good potential in lowland areas. The larger leaves, fewer spines, more solitary flowers and red fruit distinguish this species from *X. americana*. There are two varieties in Tanzania. Leaves and roots are used to treat coughs, malaria and psychological illnesses. A leaf preparation has been used to sooth inflamed eyes.

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