

Indigenous

Common names:

Ecology:

This small tree grows in woodlands and wooded grasslands, especially on rocky hillsides and termite mounds, 5-2,000 m. It is found in Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Mozambique and southwards to South Africa. In Uganda it grows in dry scrub or bush associated with *Acacia hockii* and around termite mounds. It is found in the scrub of Lake Mburo National Park and in North Eastern Region.

Uses:

Food (fruit), ornamental, live fence.

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 (sow in pots), suckers.

Seed info.:

Fruit are collected when soft and ripe then left to dry in the sun. 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:

Slow growing; pruning, coppicing.

Remarks:

A useful plant for dry areas as it can be used as a fence and also to supply fruit. The large leaves, fewer spines, more solitary flowers and red fruit distinguish this variety from var. *americana*. A plant which women of the Karamojong could be encouraged to cultivate near their homesteads.

