

Ziziphus mauritiana

Rhamnaceae

South-East Asia

Common names: **Eng:** geb, Indian jujube; **Hehe:** mtanula; **Nyam:** kagowole, mgugunu; **Sangu:** mtanula; **Suku:** mgugunu; **Swah:** mkunazi.

Ecology: This tree is now widely naturalized in the tropics, including the Mediterranean and Africa. It has a strongly developed root system and does best in areas with high a watertable. In Tanzania it is a common coastal tree, 0-1,400 m.

Uses: Firewood, charcoal, timber (beds, dhow ribs), poles, utensils (bows, arrows), carving, fodder (leaves, fruit), bee forage, shade, soil conservation, resin, gum, windbreak, live fence, tannin, dye.

Description: A much-branched, **spiny tree**, small, but may reach 7 m, drooping angular branches, **crown rounded**, often forming thickets. **BARK:** grey, branches with curved **thorns**. **LEAVES:** alternate, shiny above, hairy white below, thin, three veins from the base, rather small **but** up to 8 cm, **leaf base rounded and equal sided**. **FLOWERS:** small yellow-green, in clusters beside leaves, on hairy stalks. **FRUIT:** **rounded 1-2 cm**, shiny yellow then **red-brown**, pulp edible, **two seeds in a large stone**.

Propagation: Seedlings, direct sowing, root suckers, cuttings.

Seed info.: No. of seeds per kg: 430-2,000. Germination rates often low.

treatment:

soak in cold water, crack hard seed cover.

storage:

seed can be stored for up to a year, after which viability starts to drop gradually.

Management: Fast growing for dry areas; lopping, pollarding, pruning, coppicing.

Remarks: A very important tree for dry areas because of its many uses. However, many parasites attack the leaves and fruits.

