

Acrocarpus fraxinifolius**India, South East Asia****COMMON NAMES:** **English:** Indian ash, Shingle tree.

DESCRIPTION: A very large deciduous or semi-deciduous tree, to 40 m, with a clean, usually straight trunk **BARK:** Pale grey, rather smooth, buttressed, trunk and branches bear leaf scars. **LEAVES:** Large, compound (twice-divided) in distinctive fan shapes to 1 m, leaflets oval, wavy and pointed to 14 cm, thin and shiny. **Young red leaves** look like blossoms. **FLOWERS:** **Appear on the bare tree** along the branches and twigs, up to 20 dense heads hang down from branch ends, each 12 cm long, dripping nectar from the **red-green or scarlet flowers**, short-lived. **FRUIT:** Big bunches of dark brown flattened pods persistent on the tree. They split easily.

ECOLOGY: An Asian tree widely planted in tropical areas in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Also widely planted in eastern and southern Africa, originally introduced as a plantation shade tree. Does best with good rainfall at medium altitudes to 1,900 m, but will stand some drought. Prefers red soils. In Kenya, it is mainly grown in urban areas and quite common in Nairobi. Agroclimatic Zones II–V. Seeds in February–March (Machakos).

USES: Firewood, timber (boxes, light construction), furniture, beehives, bee forage, shade, ornamental, mulch, windbreak.

PROPAGATION: Seedlings, wildings.

SEED: 24,000–29,000 seeds per kg. Germination rates up to 60–80% but often much lower.

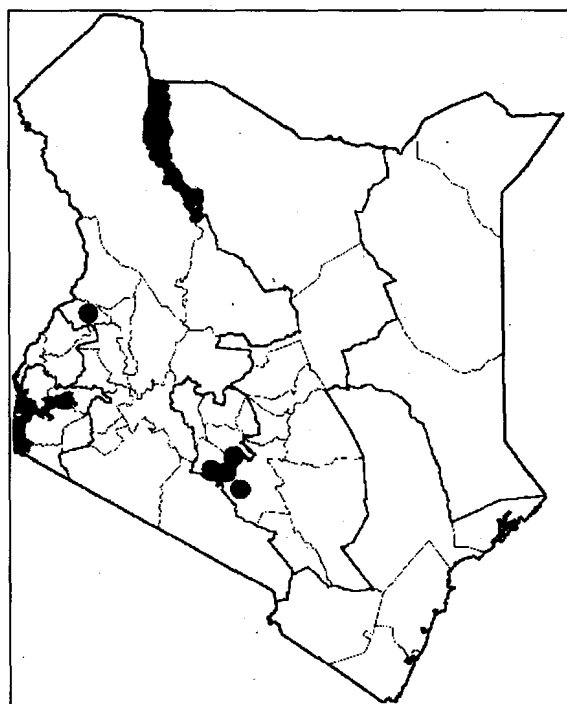
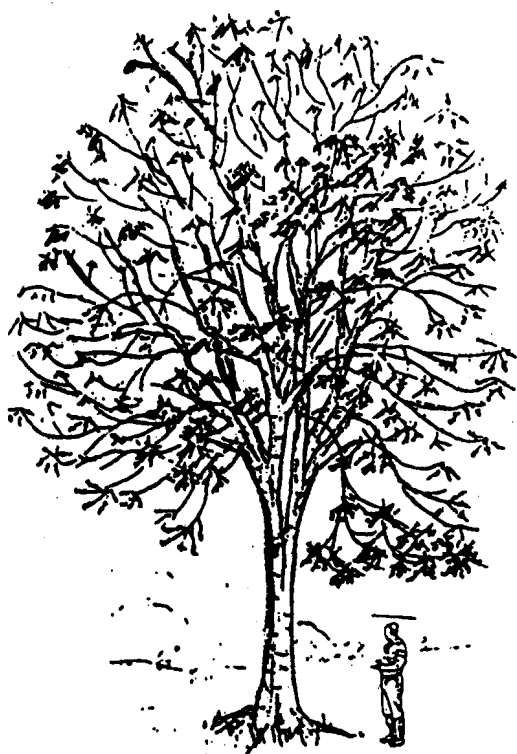
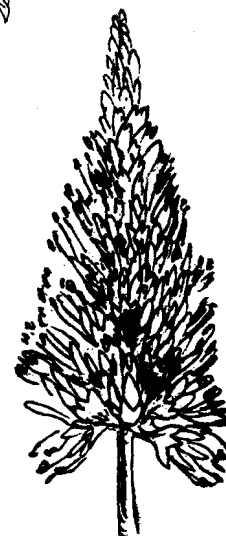
treatment: Nick, or soak seed in cold water.

storage: Seed loses viability gradually during storage. Best to use fresh seed.

MANAGEMENT: Very fast growing, attaining up to 5 m in less than 2 years; pollarding, coppicing.

Caesalpiníaceae (Fabaceae)

Flower head



***Acrocarpus fraxinifolius* (cont)**

REMARKS: Young trees may resemble palms due to the single stem and large leaves. The tree should not be planted near houses as dry branches drop off. In addition, it should not be planted in cropland as it competes with crops for nutrients. Young plants susceptible to termite attack. In its original home, the tree is said to reach 60 m

with a massive trunk. The genus *Acrocarpus* consists of only 2 species.

FURTHER READING : <http://www.worldagroforestrycentre.org/Sites/TreeDBS/AFT/AFT.htm>; Dharani, 2002; Katende et al., 1995; Mbuya et al., 1994; National Academy of Sciences, 1979; Noad and Birnie, 1989.

