

Cassia abbreviata

Indigenous

COMMON NAMES: **Boni:** Kang; **Boran:** Rabiya; **Digo:** Muhumba mkulu; **English:** Long-pod cassia; **Giriama:** Muhumba mkulu; **Kamba:** Kyathandathe, Mualandathe, Muathandathe, Mwathandathe; **Pokomo:** Msoka, Mbaraka mtoni; **Somali:** Domaderi; **Swahili:** Mbaraka; **Taita:** Msoko, Mkangu.

DESCRIPTION: A small deciduous tree or shrub with a light, open, flat or rounded crown, growing up to 10 m high. **Easily recognized when the long pods are hanging on the tree.** **BARK:** Reddish when young, becoming grey, brown or blackish with cracks when old. **LEAVES:** Compound with up to 12 pairs of hairy or slightly hairy leaflets, each leaflet oblong to 6 cm, tip rounded. **FLOWERS:** Yellow, in heads to 9 cm, usually appear when tree is leafless. **FRUIT:** Brown-black pods, 30–90 cm, thick cylindrical section containing many seeds in a dark green and sticky pulp. When dry, the pods split open and the seeds can be shaken out.

ECOLOGY: Widespread from Somalia to Mozambique and Namibia in semi-arid areas. Frequently found in *Acacia-Commiphora* bushland, less often in woodland or wooded grassland, 0–1,000 m. Agroclimatic Zones V–VII.

USES: Firewood, timber, poles (construction), furniture, medicine (bark, roots), ornamental, tannin, grave marking (Giriama).

PROPAGATION: Seedlings, wildings, root suckers.

SEED: About 15,000 seeds per kg. Germination is good and fast for fresh seed.

treatment: Soak stored seed in cold water for 12 hours.

storage: Seed can be stored for long periods.

MANAGEMENT: Pruning.

REMARKS: Several subspecies have been distinguished. *C. abbreviata* subsp. *beareana* grows only at relatively more humid sites at the coast (e.g. Gede), while subsp. *kaessneri* grows in drier parts of the coastal area (e.g. Tsavo) and in other dry areas. *C. afrofistula* (Boni:

Fabaceae (Caesalpinaceae)

Kionge; Digo: Muhumba; **Giriama:** Muhumba; **Sanya:** Wasamara; **Swahili:** Mbaraka mtoto) is a small coastal tree found in bushland and at forest edges. Leaves, bark and roots are medicinal. Wood is used for building poles, carving and for firewood.

FURTHER READING: Beentje, 1994; Blundell, 1987; Dharani, 2002; Kokwaro, 1993; Mbuya et al., 1994; Palgrave and Palgrave, 2002; Storrs, 1979; van Wyk, 1998.

