

Combretum molle**Combretaceae****Indigenous**

COMMON NAMES: **Boran:** Rokess; **Duruma:** Mugoto; **Gabra:** Rukeesa; **Kamba:** Muama; **Kikuyu:** Mukura, Murema; **Kipsigis:** Kemeliet; **Kisii:** Kumukira; **Luhya:** Mukhungula, Sheraha; **Luhya (Bukusu):** Kumukimila; **Luo:** Adugo, Keyo; **Maasai:** Olmaroroi, Emaroroi; **Meru:** Murama; **Pokot:** Komel, Cheporosto, Chepurosho; **Sabaot:** Kernbel; **Samburu:** Rokess; **Taita:** Mwama; **Tharaka:** Murama; **Tugen:** Kemelet; **Turkana:** Ekamiro, Eguyen.

DESCRIPTION: A small deciduous tree, usually 5–7 m, the trunk often crooked and branching near the base. **BARK:** Distinctive, older trunks dark brown-black, deeply grooved in squares like crocodile skin. Branchlets peeling in fibrous strips. **LEAVES:** Large, soft and hairy both sides, about 17 cm long, rounded at the base, tip pointed. **FLOWERS:** Greenish yellow spikes to 9 cm, sweet scented, attracting insects, produced before or with new leaves. **FRUIT:** Dry, 4-winged, yellow-green at first, drying bright golden-brown, looking like flowers; about 2 cm long, one seed within centre and wings wider than the seed.

ECOLOGY: A tree widespread in the wooded grassland and bushland of eastern and southern Africa; also in Yemen. It has a number of varieties. The tree tolerates forest or grass fires well. Often in groups on stony hills, 150–2,300 m. Agroclimatic Zones II–V. Flowers in March–April and seeds in September–November in Bungoma.

USES: Firewood (hard and yellow), charcoal, timber (construction), poles, posts, tool handles, medicine (roots for treating hookworm, snake bite, stomach pains, fever, dysentery and leprosy), bee forage, mulch, green manure, veterinary medicine.

PROPAGATION: Seedlings. Sow seeds in pots. Produces root suckers.

SEED: Germinate easily; 10,000–15,000 seeds per kg.

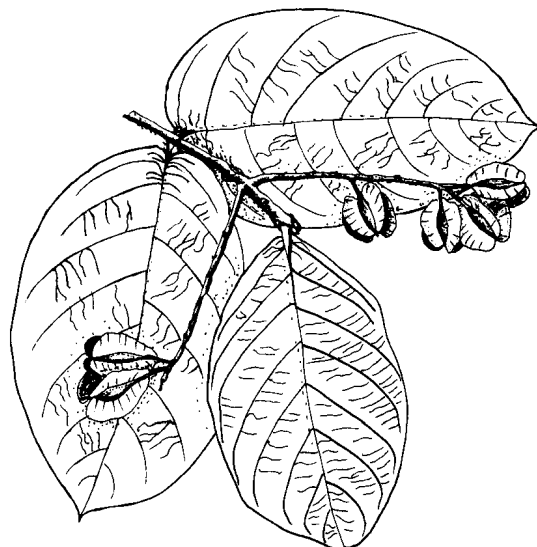
treatment: Open fruit to get seed. If difficult, soak in cold water and de-wing fruit.

storage: The whole fruit can be stored for some weeks, but best is to open fruit and sow immediately after extracting the seed. Seed will not store after being extracted..

MANAGEMENT: Slow growing; lopping, coppicing, pruning.

REMARKS: Termite resistant. Wood burns slowly giving intense heat. Leaves are traditional toilet paper.

FURTHER READING: <http://www.worldagroforestrycentre.org/Sites/TreeDBS/AFT/AFT.htm>; Backes and Ahenda, 1998; Beentje, 1994; Bein et al., 1996; Bekele-Tesemma et al., 1993; Fichtl and Adi, 1994; ITDG and IIRR, 1996; Katende et al., 1995; Kokwaro, 1993; Mbuya et al., 1994; Noad and Birnie, 1989; Palgrave and Palgrave, 2002; Sommerlatte and Sommerlatte, 1990.



Enlarged flower

