

# Combretum molle

## Combretaceae

### Indigenous

- Common names:** Arusha: ol maroroi; Bara: naganagachan; Bende: mlama  
Eng: velvet-leaved combretum, velvet bush willow; Fiome  
gendamo; Goro: mototi; Haya: mulama; Iraqw: gendai,  
gendaumo; Lugu: mlama, mlama mwenge; Maasai:  
olmaroroi, olmororoi; Mate: mdama, mlamam, ndama;  
Mbug: teteku-riru; Nguu: mlamadoli; Nyam: mlama; Nyat  
mulama; Pare: mruku; Rangi: mgiito; Samb: mnama; Suku:  
kagua, nama.
- Ecology:** A widespread tree in wooded grassland and bushland all  
over Africa. Often grows on stony hills, from the coast to  
2,300 m altitude. Common throughout Tanzania, but  
particularly so in the coastal belt and in riverine forests.
- Uses:** Firewood, charcoal, poles, posts, timber (construction), tool  
handles, medicine (roots, leaves, bark), bee forage, mulch.
- Description:** A small deciduous tree, usually 5-7 m, the trunk often  
crooked and branching near the base, with distinctive bark.  
**BARK:** older trunks dark brown-black, deeply grooved in  
squares like crocodile skin. Branchlets peeling in broad  
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, to 2 cm, seed within centre and wings  
wider than the seed.
- Propagation:** Seedlings, root suckers.
- Seed info.:** No. of seeds per kg: 10,000-15,000. Germinates easily if  
fresh.
- treatment:** not necessary, but remove wings on seeds,
- storage:** seed can be stored for only a very short period.
- Management:** Slow growing; lopping, coppicing.
- Remarks:** There are three East African varieties. The hard yellow  
wood is useful for tools and burns well giving intense heat  
It is moderately termite resistant. Medicine from the roots  
has been used for treating hookworm, snake bite, stomach  
pains, fever, dysentery and leprosy.



A. Birnie