

***Cordyla africana*****Fabaceae (Papilionaceae)****Indigenous**

**STANDARD/TRADE NAME:** Cordyla.

**COMMON NAMES:** **Digo:** Mnyungwinyungwi; **Swahili:** Mgwata, Mroma, Mvoo, Mtigonzi, Mumbwa, **Taita:** Mroma.

**DESCRIPTION:** A large spreading deciduous tree 9–25 m tall with rounded crown. **BARK:** Greyish brown and rough, thick and grooved. **LEAVES:** Alternate, compound, with 11–28 pairs of leaflets plus a terminal leaflet, each one oblong to 2.5 cm, dark green with a short hairy stalk. Held up to the light unusual **clear dots and streaks can be seen.** **FLOWERS:** **Semi-spherical heads of yellow-orange stamens** up to 2.5 cm long on branched stalks. They appear in axillary sprays or at axils, with the new leaves in July–October. No petals but sepals, ovary stalked. **FRUIT:** Unusual pods, **yellow** when ripe, **oblong to spherical**, thin walled, **about 6 cm long**. The 3 flat seeds are contained in fleshy pulp and appear in November–December. The sticky pulp smells like beans.

**ECOLOGY:** From Senegal and Gambia east to eastern Africa and south to South Africa. Found at low altitudes in hot areas, especially in riverine fringes or forests, and also in swamp forests. In Kenya, found at the coast, e.g. Arabuko-Sokoke Forest. Agroclimatic Zones III–IV.

**USES:** Timber (construction), poles, furniture (stools), tool handles, carvings, utensils (drums, mortars), edible fruit, shade.

**PROPAGATION:** Seedlings. Produces suckers.

**SEED:** Fresh seeds germinate easily.

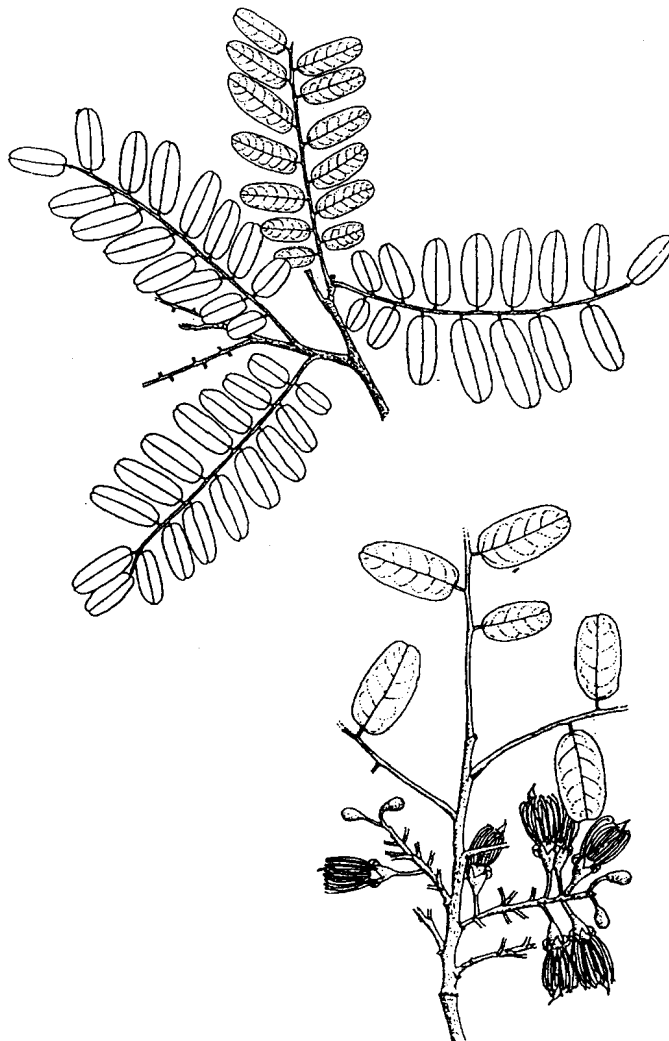
**treatment:** Not necessary.

**storage:** Viability is short. Use fresh seed.

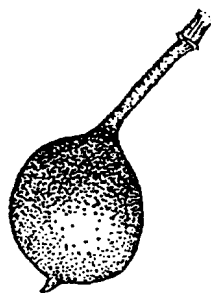
**MANAGEMENT:** Pollarding, lopping, coppicing. Growth and yield is usually reduced when the tree is planted outside its area of natural distribution.

**REMARKS:** The fruit is very tasty and is eaten both raw and cooked. It has a very high vitamin C content. The heartwood has a rich brown colour and the timber is hard but susceptible to borers.

**FURTHER READING:** Beentje, 1994; Mbuya et al., 1994; Palgrave and Palgrave, 2002; Ruffo et al., 2002; van Wyk, 1998.



Mature fruit



Seed



Section of fruit

