

Dovyalis caffra

Flacourtiaceae

Southern Africa

COMMON NAMES: **English:** Kei apple; **Kamba:** Kikambua, Ngambua (fruit); **Kikuyu:** Kaiyaba.

DESCRIPTION: A thorny evergreen shrub, usually 3–5 m.

BARK: With strong spines to 6 cm. **LEAVES:** Thin, shiny dark green to 5 cm, tip rounded or notched.

FLOWERS: Male and female flowers on different plants, male flowers cream-yellow in dense clusters, many stamens. **FRUIT:** Round, orange-yellow, to 4 cm, soft sweet flesh, up to 20 seeds within.

ECOLOGY: A spiny shrub found in open bush and *Acacia* woodlands in southern Africa from Zimbabwe to South Africa. It prefers deep well-drained soils, tolerates loamy clay and is drought resistant once established. Widely planted in tropical and subtropical areas as a protective hedge because of its dense growth when trimmed and strong spines; 1,200–2,000 m; rainfall 600–1,000 mm. Agroclimatic Zones II–IV. Flowers in December–January, fruits in April and May (Nairobi), and December–February in western Kenya.

USES: Fruit, jam, bee forage, ornamental, live fence.

PROPAGATION: Seedlings (sow in seedbed and prick out), direct sowing at site.

SEED: 27,000–47,000 seeds per kg; 50 kg of fruit yield 1 kg of seed. After collection the fruit are soaked in water for 2–3 days. The water is then drained off and the fruit squeezed by hand to separate the seeds from the pulp. After washing with water, the seeds can be dried and stored for a short period at room temperature. Germination is 60–90% within 18–20 days, or even faster under good conditions. Fruit are best collected from the ground since the plant is thorny.

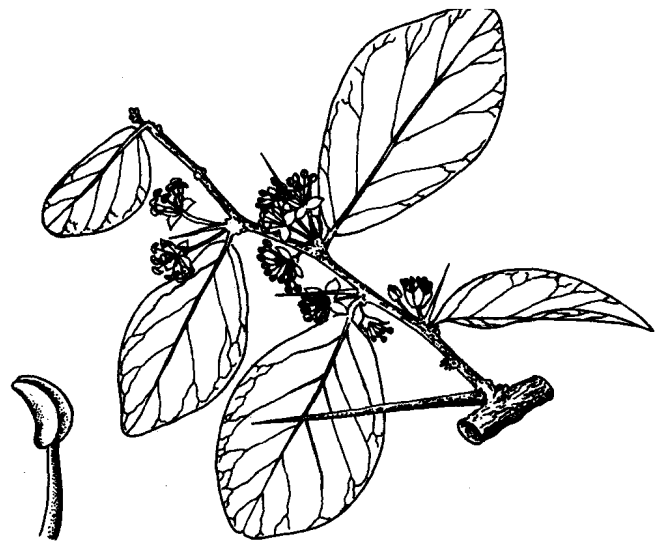
treatment: Not necessary.

storage: Sow fresh seed for best germination results.

MANAGEMENT: Fairly fast growing once established, initially slow. Trim regularly to maintain a good live fence. Coppices very well.

REMARKS: A popular species for live fencing. Many *Dovyalis* species have edible fruit but they are often very acid in taste.

FURTHER READING: <http://www.worldagroforestrycentre.org/Sites/TreeDBS/AFT/AFT.htm>; Albrecht, 1993; Dharani, 2002; Fichtl and Adi, 1994; Katende et al., 1995; Maundu et al., 1999; Mbuya et al., 1994; Noad and Birnie, 1989; Palgrave and Palgrave, 2002; Verheij and Coronel, 1991.



Anther and pistil

