

***Senna singueana* (*Cassia singueana*)**

Fabaceae (Caesalpinaceae)

Indigenous

COMMON NAMES: **Digo:** Muhumba; **Giriama:** Muhumbu; **Kamba:** Mukengeka, Munyunga nai; **Luhya (Bukusu):** Kumusilamosi; **Samburu:** Senetoi; **Swahili:** Mbaraka; **Taita:** Msua, Mwangia.

DESCRIPTION: A deciduous shrub or small tree, usually 4–5 m, with a light open crown. Rarely up to 15 m tall. **BARK:** Red, becoming grey-brown and rough. **LEAVES:** Compound with 4–10 pairs oval leaflets, bright green, 2.5–5 cm long. **Between each leaflet pair there is a conspicuous gland on the stalk.** Leaflets are round at the tip and base and have a very short stalk. **FLOWERS:** Striking deep yellow, fragrant, in large loose sprays to 15 cm, at the ends of branches on the bare tree. The 5 sepals and 5 petals are rounded and yellow, to 3 cm long; the 10 stamens are of 3 different sizes. **The flower stalks, 2–4 cm, have conspicuous glands.** **FRUIT:** A narrow cylindrical pod to 25 cm, sharply pointed and narrowed between seeds. Pods hang in clusters and ripen the following year; yellow when ripe. **Seeds circular, flat, only 5–6 mm.**

ECOLOGY: A widespread plant in semi-arid parts of tropical Africa. Found in Kenya at the coast as well as in the central and western parts in bushed or wooded grassland, dry or coastal bushland, often on termite mounds, in luggas or riverine. Agroclimatic Zones IV–V. Flowers in January–March and fruits in October–December in Bungoma; in full flower in May in Machakos District.

USES: Medicine (roots), tannin.

PROPAGATION: Seedlings, wildings.

SEED:

treatment: Not necessary.

MANAGEMENT: Coppicing.

REMARKS: A good medicinal tree for many ailments, e.g. stomach pains.

FURTHER READING: Backes and Ahenda, 1998; Beentje, 1994; Bein et al., 1996; Dharani, 2002; Palgrave and Palgrave, 2002; Ruffo et al., 2002; Storrs, 1979.

