

Bridelia micrantha

Euphorbiaceae

Indigenous

COMMON NAMES: Digo: Mdudu; Kikuyu: Mukoigo; Kisii: Omotarakaranga; Luhya: Shikanganya; Luhya (Bukusu): Kumulondang'ombe, Kumukhulang'wa; Luo: Athuno, Odughu kulo; Maasai: Oleragia; Meru: Mukwegwe; Nandi: Chemegulde, Ngorouet; Pokomo: Mdudu, Mpuju; Samburu: Lapironit; Swahili: Mkarakara, Mkarati, Mtutu; Teso: Eruaka.

DESCRIPTION: A medium-sized, often thorny, leafy evergreen tree with dense spreading crown, to 13 m. Young stems have a zigzag form, dotted with paler breathing pores. **BARK:** Grey-brown, flaking with age. **LEAVES:** Appear compound but actually alternate along branches, dark shiny green above, to 12 cm long, veins parallel, extending along margin. Leaf stalks slightly hairy. **FLOWERS:** Small and yellowish green, bunched in leaf axils along branch, male and female flowers separate but on the same tree. **FRUIT:** Soft, purple-black, oval, up to 8 mm, sweet and edible when ripe, one-celled.

ECOLOGY: A tree of humid and subhumid areas in eastern and southern Africa. Widespread in Kenya and particularly common in the western and central parts of the country. Found in riverine forests, forest edges and occasionally in open woodland, 0–2,200 m. Agroclimatic Zones II–III. Flowers mainly in December and produces seed in March in western Kenya.

USES: Firewood, charcoal, timber, poles, tool handles, utensils (spoons), construction material for granaries (branches), edible fruit, medicine (bark, roots, leaf sap), fodder (leaves for goats), bee forage, shade, mulch, river-bank stabilization, red dye (bark).

PROPAGATION: Seedlings.

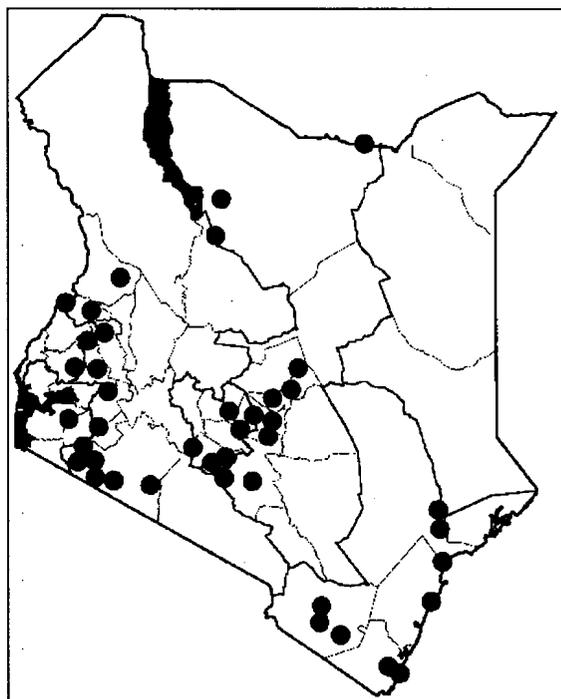
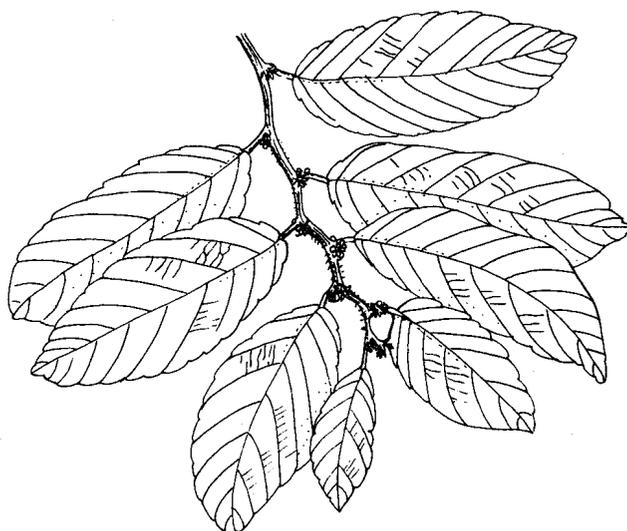
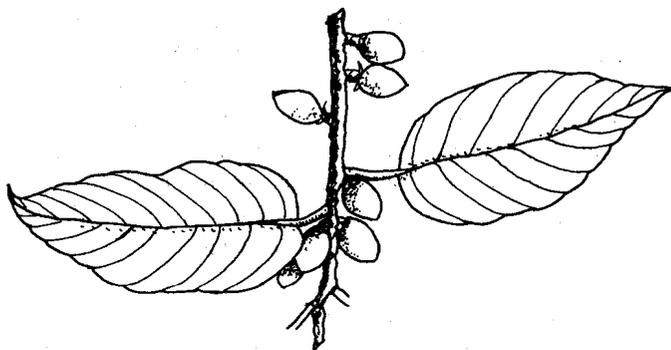
SEED: Prolific seeder.

treatment: Remove fruit pulp and then sow immediately. About 19,000 seeds per kg. Germination is very good and uniform, 90–100% after 20–25 days.

storage: Short viability period (oily seed). Do not store at all.

MANAGEMENT: Fast growing in good sites; pollarding, coppicing.

REMARKS: Becoming scarce due to over-exploitation. It is said to attract caterpillars and birds and consequently is not planted near homesteads. Wood resistant to termite attack. Commonly intercropped and managed by small-scale farmers.



***Bridelia micrantha* (cont)**

Bridelia scleroneura (**Kipsigis:** Kapturesut; **Luhya (Bukusu):** Kumunyekerwe) is mainly found in central and western Kenya, in woodlands. *B. cathartica* (**Boni:** Abubeu; **Digo:** Mkalakala; **Giriama:** Mkalakala; **Swahili:** Mnembenembe, Makarakara, Mkarati) is a coastal tree or shrub. Leaves and roots are medicinal; wood is used for firewood and building poles; shade.

Bridelia taitensis (**Boran:** Karro; **Kamba:** Mwaanzia; **Mbeere:** Muce; **Samburu:** Lapironit; **Tharaka:** Muyee) is a shrub or small tree found mainly in the Taita region and Eastern Province, where it is endemic. Leaves usually widest towards the tip. Fruit has 2 cells and turns purplish black when ripe. The species has medicinal uses. Among the Tharaka, the dead were buried under this shrub. All these *Bridelia* species have edible fruits that have a sweetish sour taste.

FURTHER READING: <http://www.worldagroforestrycentre.org/Sites/TreeDBS/AFT/AFT.htm>; Backes and Ahenda, 1998; Beentje, 1994; Bekele-Tesemma et al., 1993; Katende et al., 1995; Kokwaro, 1993; Mbuya et al., 1994; Noad and Birnie, 1989; Palgrave and Palgrave, 2002; Ruffo et al., 2002; Storrs, 1979.