

Prunus africana (Pygeum africanum)

Rosaceae

Indigenous

Common names: Arusha: ol gujuk, olkonjuku; Chag: mkonde-konde, msendo, mudy, muuri; Eng: red stinkwood; Fipa: mfila; Fiome: gwaami; Hehe: mwiluti; Iraqw: gwaami, gwami; Kinga: mpembati; Maasai: olkonjuku; Meru: kondekonde; Nguu: mdundulu; Nyiha: ligambo; Rangi: wami; Samb: mkomahoya; Zinza: mufubia.

Ecology: A useful timber tree widespread from West to southern Africa, usually in high rainfall areas, 1,500-2,300 m. In forests the high foliage is open, the branches often pendulous, but in grassland the tree is more rounded and compact. It is a common tree on mountains.

Uses: Firewood, charcoal, timber (construction), poles, utensils (mortars), medicine (leaves, bark), bee forage, shade, ornamental, mulch, windbreak.

Description: An evergreen tree to 25 m. BARK: rough, dark, scaling irregularly, branches corky, branchlets dotted **with** breathing pores. LEAVES: glossy dark green above, oval to 10 cm, margin with shallow rounded teeth, leaf stalk typically pink, to 2 cm. Crushed leaves have a bitter almond smell. FLOWERS: very small, fragrant, green-white in short sprays, on stalks to 8 cm. Flowering is uneven during the year. FRUIT: rounded, about 1 cm, dark red. often bi-lobed, containing one or two seeds surrounded by pulp.

Propagation: Seedlings, wildings.

Seed info.: No. of seeds per kg: 3,600-5,000. Ideally 60-80% germination in 35-50 days. Collect only dark brown ripe fruits from the crown of the tree or the ground. Remove the pulp by soaking for 24 hours, then wash over a wire mesh. Spread in a thin layer in an airy shaded place to dry—but for 4 hours only.

treatment: not necessary, but remove pulp from the seed.

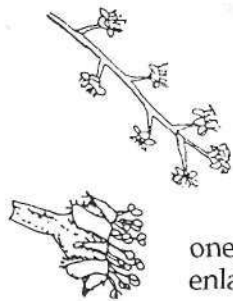
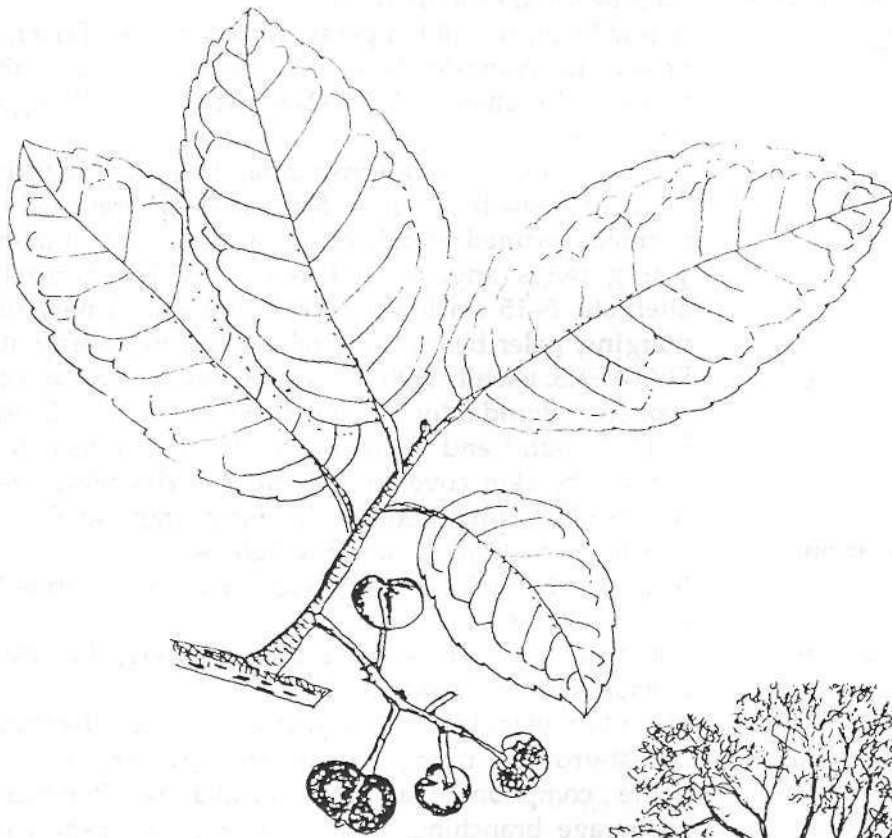
storage: seed does not store; fresh seed should be used. Moist leaves around the seed minimize moisture loss during temporary storage and transport.

Management: Fairly slow growing.

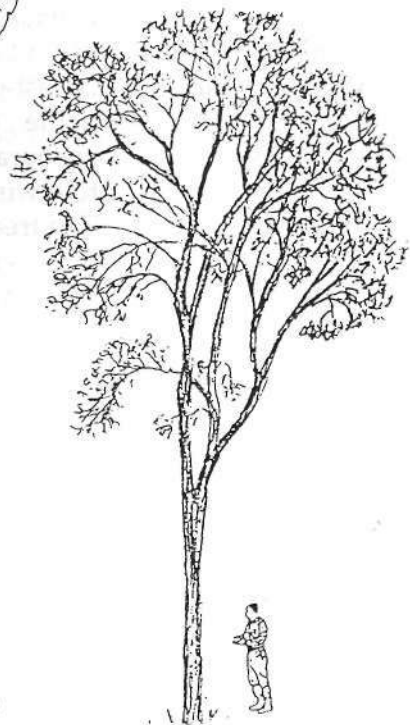
Remarks: Wildings are commonly used for large-scale planting. The fruit are eaten by monkeys and birds so seed is spread by this means. The heartwood darkens to a dense red. It is hard and medium weight, not durable in the ground, but a useful timber for furniture, poles, etc.

Prunus africana (*Pygeum africanum*)

Rosaceae



one flower enlarged



A. Birnie