

## Tree Seed Information Leaflet



*Grevillea robusta*

**Species:** *Grevillea robusta* Cunn.

**Family:** Proteaceae

**Common name:** Silky Oak, Grevillea

**Local names:** Mukima, Mubariti (Kikuyu)

Bolebolea (Luo)

Wakhuisi (Luhya)

Kapkawet (Nandi)

Omokabiria (Kisii)

**Description:** *Grevillea robusta* is a semi deciduous tree up to 20m high or more with a straight bole. Bark is dark grey, very rough and vertically grooved. Leaves are silver-grey below and pale green above, fern-like. Flowers are in spikes, yellow-orange. Mature fruits are dark-brown capsules with a slender beak, splitting to release two winged and light seeds.

**Distribution:** The species is native to eastern Australia and is widely planted in high and medium potential zones, up to 3000m. It grows well in medium loam or light sandy soils but is not tolerant to waterlogging. It is very common in farms in the central highlands; Embu, Meru, Muranga, Thika and Kiambu districts.

**Flowering and fruit development:** Peak flowering is between January and February in South Western Kenya, and between September and December in central parts of Kenya. Pollination may be by birds, bats or insects. Seed maturity takes about 2–4 months. Seeds can be collected from March–June or December – February in South Western and Eastern province respectively.

**Method of collection:** The mature yellow brown fruits (follicle) are collected from the crown by spreading a net, canvas, etc under the tree and climbing to hand pick the fruits or cutting the branchlets with ripe capsules.

**Seed extraction, cleaning and drying:** Capsules are sun dried by spreading on fine wire mesh/screen, turning regularly and threshing lightly to release seeds. Seeds are light and therefore care should be taken when threshing to avoid damaging them. After extraction, the seeds are cleaned using sieves, hand sorting and winnowing. Seeds are sun-dried to required moisture content (<10%) by spreading in thin layer and turning regularly to avoid overheating.

**Seed weight:** There are 70,000–100,000 seed per kilogram depending on the provenance and the climatic conditions of the ripening year.

**Seed storage:** Seeds can be stored in airtight containers in cool dry place for up to 2 years without significant loss of viability.

**Seed Sowing and Germination:** Seeds germinate within 8–20 days. The expected germination rate

is between 50 and 70%. Pre-sowing treatment is not necessary.

To sow, seeds are broadcasted thinly and evenly on a well-prepared seedbed (containing sand or a mixture of sand and soil) and covered with a thin layer of sand/soil. Light mulch (dry grass) is spread over the seedbed to keep it moist. Watering is done regularly (morning and evening) checking daily for any emergent seedling. Mulch is removed immediately germination starts. The young seedlings are transplanted when they are large enough to handle (3-4 leaves). Seedlings are transplanted to soil mixed with NPK fertilizer at the rate of 30-40grams per 20liters of soil. Seedlings are planted out when they are 30cm tall (4-6months).

**End uses:** The species is used for timber (furniture, plywood, veneer), poles/post and fuel wood. Other uses include bee forage, fodder, mulch, soil conservation, windbreak, shade and ornamental.

For more information contact

The Director  
Kenya Forestry Research Institute  
P.O. Box 20412 - 00200  
Nairobi

Tel: +254 722 259 778/2  
+254 722 157 414  
+254 734 251 888

E-mail: [kefri@nbi.ispkenya.com](mailto:kefri@nbi.ispkenya.com)

Website: [www.kefri.org](http://www.kefri.org)