

## Tree Seed Information Leaflets



*Acacia xanthophloea*

**Species:** *Acacia xanthophloea* Benth.

**Family:** Mimosaceae

**Common name:** Fever tree, Naivasha thorn

**Local names:** Murera (Kikuyu)

Kuth Ataro (Luo)

Mwelela (Taita)

Kimwea, mulela (Kamba)

Olerai (Maasai)

**Description:** *Acacia xanthophloea* is large tree up to 25m high with a flat crown and light foliage. Bark is yellow – green, smooth and powdery, cracked when older. Thorns are conspicuous when young straight white in pairs up to 10cm long. Flowers are in round head, white or pink. Mature pods are yellow brown 4-12 cm long and slightly constricted between seeds, always in drooping position, never opening but breaking into segments. Each pod contains 5-10 pale dark green seeds.

**Distribution:** It is wide spread and common in places with high ground water, lake sides and riverine between 600-2,100 m often on black cotton soils but also on sandy soils. It is very common around lake Naivasha, Nairobi, Kajiado, Nakuru and Narok in agroclimatic zone III and IV.

**Flowering and fruit development:** Flowering occurs in August and September. Pollination is by insect and seed matures in 4-6 months. Seeds can be collected between December and February.

**Method of collection:** The mature yellow brown pods are collected from the crown of standing trees by spreading a net/canvas sheet under the tree and shaking the branches using hooks to release the pods.

**Seed extraction, cleaning and drying:** Pods are sun dried and then threshed lightly with sticks to release the seeds. After extraction, seeds are cleaned by hand sorting, winnowing or sieving to separate the unwanted materials and other impurities. Seeds are then dried to required moisture content (< 10%).

**Seed weight:** There are 24,000-30,000 seed per kilogram depending on the provenance and the climatic conditions of the ripening year.

**Seed storage:** Seeds can be stored in airtight containers (plastic, kilner jars, and aluminium packets) in cool dry place for up to 2 years with no significant loss of viability.

**Seed Sowing and Germination:** Under ideal conditions, seed germinate within 5-15 days. For good germination results pour boiling water into a container with seeds and leave to cool overnight.

Seeds are sown by broadcasting them thinly and evenly on a well-prepared seedbed (containing sand or a mixture of sand and soil). They are then covered with a thin layer of soil. The seedbed is then cover with a light mulch (dry grass) 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 (4-5 leaves). Seedlings can be transplanted to pots or polythene tubes containing soil mixed with NPK fertilizer at the rate of 30-40 grams per 20 liters of soil. Seedlings are planted out when they are 30 cm tall (4-6 months).

**End uses:** The wood of *Acacia xanthophlea* is used for timber, firewood, charcoal, poles and posts. Other uses include fodder, riverbank stabilization, bee foliage, shade and ornamental.

For more information contact

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