

Tree Seed Information Leaflet



Milicia excelsa

Species: *Milicia excelsa* (Welw.) C.C.Berg.

Family: Moraceae

Common name: Iroko

Local name: Minarui (Boni)

Mvule (Swahili)

Mururi (Meru)

Murie (Taveta)

Olua (Luo)

Murumba (Luhya)

Description: *Milicia excelsa* is a deciduous tree usually up to 30m high but can grow up to 50m with a straight clear bole. Bark is ash-grey, later brown to nearly black, exuding milky sap when cut. Leaves are oval and rough above with clear veins and toothed along the margin. Flowers are dioecious (separate male and female tree), small and greenish; female flowers in erect spikes, male flowers in drooping spikes. Mature fruits are greenish, soft and mulberry-like, about 6-7cm long, composed of numerous single fruits, which are one-seeded.

Distribution: Occurs in moist lowland forests and wooded grassland from sea level to 1,400m. It prefers rich well-drained soils. Common in coastal forests (Witu, Shimba hills, Buda and Taita), also in Meru and Nyanza.

Flowering and fruiting: Flowering varies according to its distribution. At the coast, flowering is between January and March, in Western Kenya from October to December. Seed maturity takes about a month.

Seed collection method: The mature greenish fruits (syncarps) are collected from the crown by spreading a net, canvas, etc under the tree and climbing the tree to hand pick the fruits or shake the branches to release the fruits.

Seed extraction and drying and cleaning: Ripe syncarps are extracted by soaking in water for 24 hours, followed by hand squeezing. Seeds are cleaned by hand sorting or by floating method. Seeds are dried to required moisture content (< 10%) either in the sun or under shade

Seed weight: There are 450, 000-550,000 seeds per kilogram.

Seed storage: Seed can be stored in airtight containers in a cool dry place for a period of up to 2years

with no significant loss of viability.

Seed Sowing and Germination: Seeds germinate within 25-40 days. The expected germination rate of mature and healthy seed lot is 45% on average. Pretreatment is not necessary.

Seeds are sown by broadcasting thinly and evenly on a well-prepared seedbed (containing sand or a mixture of sand and soil) and covered with a thin layer of soil/sand. The seedbed is then covered with a light mulch (dry grass) to keep it moist. Watering is done regularly (morning and evening). 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 30-40grams per 20liters of soil. Seedlings are planted out when they are 30cm tall (4-6months)

End Uses: The wood is durable and termite resistant, it is used for timber, for construction, furniture, cabinetwork, paneling, frames and floors and production of fuelwood. Other uses include mulch, shade and wind break.

For more information contact

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