

## Tree Seed Information Leaflet



*Podocarpus falcatus*

**Species:** *Podocarpus falcatus* Mirb. (P. gracilior)

**Family:** podocarpaceae

**Common name:** Podo

**Local names:** Muthengera (Kikuyu)

Muvengea (Kamba)

Mubiribiri (Meru)

Sapta, Septet (Sebei)

Benet (Elgeyo, Marakwet)

Piripirindi (Samburu)

**Description:** *Podocarpus falcatus* is an evergreen tree up to 30m high with a straight bole. Bark is grey to brown, cracking and peeling in long narrow strips. Leaves are narrow, shiny dark green, gradually

tapering, juvenile leaves are much larger and paler. Male catkins yellow-brown, female cones green to grey or yellow-green, purple brown when mature and 2cm across.

**Distribution:** The species occurs in upland forest often associated with *Juniperus procera* between 1,250 and 2,700m above sea level, often riverine at some places forming almost pure stand. It is mainly found on the slopes of Mt. Kenya, Mt. Elgon, Aberdares, Tugen hills, Tinderet and Cherangani forest. It is also found on isolated mountains of northern Kenya.

**Flowering and fruit development:** The species flowers between April and May in Kabarnet. Pollination is by insect and seed maturity takes 9-12 months. Collection is from January to April.

**Method of collection:** The mature yellow fruits are collected from the ground after natural seed fall or by climbing the tree and shaking the branches to release the ripe fruits on a net or canvass sheet that is spread under the tree.

**Seed extraction, cleaning and drying:** Fruits are soaked in water for 24 hours and then squeezed and rubbed gently on fine wire mesh/screen and washed in running water to remove the pulp. Seeds are then cleaned by hand sorting and dried under shade.

**Seed weight:** There are 1,200-1,400 seeds in a kilogram.

**Seed storage:** Seeds can be stored in airtight containers in cool dry place for 1-2 years with no significant loss in viability

**Seed Sowing and Germination:** To get good germination results, seeds should be cracked with a hammer or table vice. Pretreated seeds germinate within 20-40 days. The expected germination rate is about 30%.

To sow, broadcast the seeds thinly and evenly on a well-prepared seedbed (containing sand or a mixture of sand and soil). Cover with a thin layer of soil. Watering is done regularly (morning and evening) as necessary. The young seedlings are transplanted when they are large enough to handle (4-5 leaves). They are transported to soil mixed with NPK fertilizer at the rate of 30-40 grams per 20liters of soil. Seedlings are planted out when they are 30cm tall (4-6months).

**End uses:** The species is used for timber (furniture, light paneling and ply boards), poles and fuel wood. It is also planted for ornamental, windbreak and shade. The bark is used for medicinal purposes.

For more information contact

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