

Seed Information Leaflet



Commiphora baluensis

Species: *Commiphora baluensis* Engl.

Family: Burseraceae

Common name: Commiphora

Local name: Itula, Mutula (Kamba)
Hagarsu (Borana)
Hargar (Somali)

Description: *Commiphora baluensis* is a deciduous tree up to 20m (the tallest commiphora in Kenya); trunk up to 35cm diameter at breast height. The outer bark of the trunk and large branches

translucent and peeling in large white yellow flakes from the blue-green underbark. Slash has reddish layers, exuding yellowish scented liquid. Leaves are 3-5 foliolate, leaflets thin, with serrated margins. Flowers appear with the young leaves in pedunculate cymes. Fruits borne on stalks 10-15mm long.

Distribution: Widespread in dry or wet lowland or upland forest edges and also riverine forests between 600-1600m in areas with a mean annual rainfall of 450-800mm. Occur on deciduous woodland forest often on rocky ground (common around Kibwezi and Endau). Also in Northeastern, Coast and Kajiando.

Flowering and fruiting: Flowering occurs in October/November. Seed collection is in January/February.

Seed collection method: It is done from the crown by climbing and cutting the down the twigs containing ripe fruits.

Seed extraction and drying and cleaning: Seed extraction involves depulping the fruits by pounding using mortar and pestle and then washing the pulp in running water. Seeds are then sun dried to moisture content of <10%.

Seed weight: There are 13,000 – 16,000 seeds per kilogram.

Seed storage: Seeds can be stored in airtight containers in a cool dry place for a period of up to 2 years with no significant loss of viability.

Seed sowing and germination: Seeds germinate within 10-60 days. The expected germination rate of mature and healthy seed lot is between 10 to 20%. Pre-sowing treatment is not necessary. 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 30-40grams per 20liters of soil. Seedlings are planted out when they are 30cm tall (4-6months).

End Uses: The species is used for timber (furniture and joinery), making traditional beehives and

motors.

For more information contact

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