

Leaflet No. 54

## Tree Seed Information Leaflet



*Ehretia cymosa*

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Kenya Forestry Research Institute

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**Species:** *Ehretia cymosa* Thonn.

**Family:** Boraginaceae

**Local names:** Murembu (Kikuyu, Meru)  
Mutereriet (Kipsigis)  
Luchachur (Samburu)  
Endalai ekutuk (Maasai)  
Mdana (Taita)

### **Description**

*Ehretia cymosa* is an indigenous deciduous shrub or tree growing to a height of 2 - 9 m often branching from the base. The trunk is crooked with weak drooping branches. Leaves are oval with pointed tips and round base, on a stalk 1 - 3 cm long. The leaves are rarely flat and bubbles up between the veins. Veins are raised below and have hairs. Flowers are in loose large heads which are about 15 cm across on hairy stalks often covering the tree. Flowers are small white-yellow-pink and quite fragrant. The divided style and brown-black anthers hang out of the bell-like flowers. Fruits are borne in large heads. Fruits are round, orange-red and berry-like later turning black. Each fruit is pointed and breaks into four parts each containing a hard comma shaped seed.

### **Distribution**

*Ehretia cymosa* is widespread in evergreen forest and forest patches from 1,200 - 1,850 m above sea level in Agro-climatic zones II - III.

### **Flowering and fruiting**

Flowering occurs between September and October. Pollination is done by insects and fruit maturity takes 4 - 6 months. Seeds can be collected from February to April.

### **Seed collection method**

The mature orange-red fruits are collected from the crown by hand picking or by cutting down the branchlets containing ripe fruits. Collection starts when about 80% of the fruits are mature or ripe.

### **Seed extraction, drying and cleaning**

The mature fruits are de-pulped by squeezing or rubbing gently on a wire mesh or screen and washed in running water to remove the mucilage. Seeds are then sun dried to the required moisture content of less than 10%. Seeds are cleaned by separating the unwanted materials such as twigs, leaves and broken seeds by hand sorting. A purity of 95% can be achieved.

### **Seed storage**

*Ehretia cymosa* seed can be stored in airtight containers (plastic containers, kilner jars, and aluminium packets) in a cool dry place for up to 1 year without significant loss of viability.

### **Number of seeds per kilogram**

There are about 20,000 - 30,000 seeds per kilogram of clean seed.

### **Seed sowing and germination**

Pre-sowing treatment is not necessary. Under ideal conditions *Ehretia cymosa* seed germinate within 10 - 20 days of sowing. The average germination rate of a mature and healthy seed lot is 60 - 80%. The expected number of seedlings per kilogram of seed is 15,000.

### **Uses**

*Ehretia cymosa* is used for firewood, charcoal production, poles, tool handles, medicine (roots and leaves), fodder, bee forage, shade and ornamental purposes.