

Leaflet No. 23

Tree Seed Information Leaflet



Eucalyptus camaldulensis



Kenya Forestry Research Institute

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Species: *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* Dehnh.

Family: Myrtaceae

Common name: River red gum

Local names: Muringamu, Munyua-mai (Kikuyu)

Musanduku (Kamba)

Bawo, Bap kaladali (Luo)

Description: *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* is an evergreen tree growing to a height of 30m with a straight clear bole. Bark is white to brown, peeling in thin long strips and exudes reddish gum when cut. Leaves are greyish blue, long and drooping. Flowers are white in colour and occur in clusters. Mature capsules (fruits) are brownish, small with 4 valves containing many tiny seeds.

Distribution: The species is native to Australia. It grows in deep silt or clay soil at 0-1600m above sea level with a mean annual rainfall of between 250 and 600mm. It is a typical plantation species of semi-arid areas and coast, grown in Kibwezi, lower Embu and Gede.

Flowering and fruit development: Flowering and fruiting occur throughout the year with two peak seeding seasons in December/January at the coast and February/March in other areas.

Seed collection method: The mature grey brownish capsules are collected from standing trees by experienced climbers or from felled trees during tree harvesting. Ripe capsules or twigs containing capsules are picked or cut using looping shears, hand secateurs or hooks.

Seed extraction and drying: Capsules are sun-dried by spreading on canvas sheet and turned regularly. They are then threshed lightly to release the seeds. The extracted seeds are cleaned using sieves to remove capsules, small twigs, leaves and other impurities. The cleaned seeds are usually a mixture of seed and tiny similar looking chaff that is difficult to separate. Seeds are sun-dried to the required moisture content of less than 10% for storage or distribution.

Number of seeds per kg: There are 300,000 to 400,000 seeds per kilogram but only a purity of about 20 to 40% can be achieved.

Seed storage: Seeds can be stored in airtight containers (glass or plastic jars, or aluminium packets) in a cool dry place for 1 to 2 years with no significant loss of viability.

Seed sowing and germination: Pre-sowing treatment is not necessary. Seeds germinate readily within 7 to 14 days after sowing. The average germination of mature and healthy seed lot is 70%. The expected number of seedlings per kg of seed is about 75,000.

Owing to the small size of the seed it is best to mix them with fine dry sand/sand 2-3 times the volume of the seed before sowing. The mixture is then broadcasted thinly and evenly on a seedbed. The seedbed is then covered with light mulch (dry grass). Watering is done regularly (morning and evening) checking daily for any emergent seedling. Mulch is removed immediately germination starts. Transplanting (pricking out) can be to polythene tubes or other type of potting containers filled with soil. Seedlings are planted out after 4-6 months when they are about 30cm tall

Uses: *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* is used for production of timber, poles, posts, plywood, firewood, charcoal and bee forage.

For more information contact

The Director
Kenya Forestry Research Institute
P.O.Box 20412 - 00200
Nairobi, Kenya

Tel: +254-724-259781/2,
+254-722-157414
+254-20-2010651/2

E-mail: director@kefri.org

Website: www.kefri.org