

***Acacia abyssinica* subsp. *calophylla*****Fabaceae (Mimosaceae)****Indigenous**

**COMMON NAMES:** English: Flat-top acacia; Kikuyu: Mugaa; Kipsigis: Sirtuet; Kisii: Eyesurura, Omonyanya; Luhya (Bukusu): Kumunyaali; Luhya: Munyanya; Luo: Ogongo; Nandi: Seretuet; Ogik: Leinet; Pokot: Atat; Sabaot: Marambajet.

**DESCRIPTION:** A large tree to 20 m high, flat-topped when mature. **BARK:** Dark to greyish brown, rough on the stem of old trees, papery and peeling on young trees. **THORNS:** Very variable, in pairs at the nodes; whitish, as short as 4 mm or long as 40 mm, sometimes none. **LEAVES:** Divided into very small leaflets, to 5 mm long, sometimes glands at leaf base. **FLOWERS:** Numerous heads of white flowers, buds pink. **FRUIT:** Grey to brown pods to 12 cm, leathery, straight or slightly curved, often softly hairy, splitting open.

**ECOLOGY:** Found in Africa from Ethiopia and Sudan south to Mozambique and Zimbabwe; also in Saudi Arabia and Yemen. Well distributed in Rift Valley and Nyanza Provinces of Kenya, where it is common in the Lake Victoria basin. Also common around Muguga in Kiambu District. Wooded grassland and forest edges, especially in highlands, 1,200–2,300 m. Very common in Agroclimatic Zones II–III. Flowers in March–May and seeds in November–December in Bungoma.

**USES:** Firewood, charcoal, poles, posts (susceptible to beetle attack), medicine, fodder, bee forage, shade, ornamental, nitrogen-fixing.

**PROPAGATION:** Seedlings, direct sowing at site, wildings.

**SEED:** Seed quite small; 16,000–18,000 per kg. Highly susceptible to beetle attack while still in the pod, as well as after extraction. Damaged seeds should be separated by floating.

**treatment:** Seeds are extracted by drying and threshing the pods. Nick or immerse in hot water, allow to cool and soak for 36–48 hours before sowing to break seed dormancy.

**storage:** Seed can be stored for long periods. Add ash to reduce insect damage.

**MANAGEMENT:** Growth rate is medium to fast. Self-prunes, but some pruning may be required when young. Often left in pastures and crop fields. Coppices when young. Can be lopped and pollarded.

**REMARKS:** Drought tolerant. Good for degraded land and along gullies. Not recommended around homesteads since branches tend to fall off. Subsp. *abyssinica* is confined to the Ethiopian highlands.

**FURTHER READING:** Albrecht, 1993; Backes and Ahenda, 1998; Beentje, 1994; Bein et al., 1996; Bekele-Tesemma et al., 1993; Fichtl and Adji, 1994; Katende et al., 1995; Noad and Birnie, 1989; Palgrave and Palgrave, 2002; Sommerlatte and Sommerlatte, 1990.

