

## Acacia kirkii

### Indigenous

**COMMON NAMES:** **Kamba:** Kimwea, Mwea; **Kipsigis:** Chepyalilet; **Maasai:** Ol-lerai.

**DESCRIPTION:** A handsome flat-topped thorn tree to 15 m with ascending branches radiating from low down the trunk. **BARK:** Orange-yellow, smooth, peeling thinly in scrolls to show greenish yellow underbark. **THORNS:** In pairs, straight, up to 8 cm long, greyish white. **LEAVES:** Twice-divided, 6–14 pairs of pinnae, 7–20 pairs leaflets. **FLOWERS:** Reddish pink in buds, creamy white when fully open, in round heads, slightly fragrant. **FRUIT:** Brown straight pods, much constricted between the seeds, often with a raised boss above each seed, up to 9 cm long.

**ECOLOGY:** The species is widespread from West to East Africa and south to Namibia and Botswana. In Kenya, mainly in Central and Rift Valley Provinces. Common in Narok, Kiambu, Nairobi, Machakos and Kajiado areas. Found in riverine woodlands, grasslands and areas of seasonal drainage; 1,300–1,900 m. Agroclimatic Zone III. Flowers in June–July around Nairobi and Kajiado.

**USES:** Firewood, charcoal, medicine, fodder, shade, dead fence (thorny branches), inner bark is chewed to quench thirst.

**PROPAGATION:** Seedling, wildings.

**SEED:** 6,500 per kg.

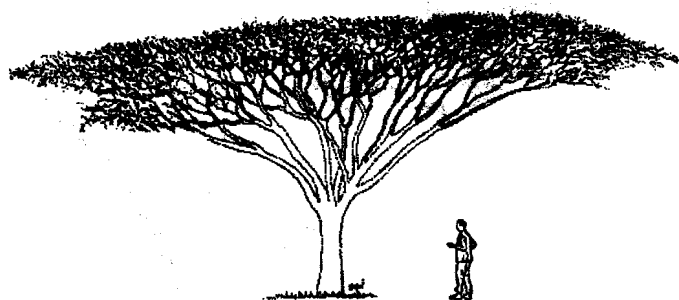
**treatment:** Immerse seed in hot water, allow to cool and soak for 24 hours before sowing to break seed dormancy. Dormancy also broken by fire.

**storage:** Seed can be stored for long periods.

**MANAGEMENT:** Fast growing. Self-pruning, but prune lower branches if necessary. May affect crops negatively due to its rather thick and spreading canopy and shallow lateral roots.

**REMARKS:** Commonly used to fence homesteads. The tree produces good-quality firewood and charcoal.

*A. hockii* (**Kamba:** Kinyua; **Kikuyu:** Mugaa; **Luo:** Arumbe, Oriang'; **Maasai:** Enchapalani, Orcharpalani; **Nandi:** Telatibilet; **Pokot:** Chuwan; **Teso:** Ekisim; **Tugen:** Tilatil; **Sabaot:** Ndiniet; **Turkana:** Echekereng) is a related but smaller acacia with peeling bark and yellow flower heads. It is widespread in Kenya but lacking at the coast. It prefers rocky places. Fibre from its bark is used for building bomas and for ropes. Inner bark fibre is chewed for its sweet juice. Also used for firewood, fodder and fencing.



## Fabaceae (Mimosaceae)

**FURTHER READING:** Beentje, 1994; Blundell, 1987; Kokwaro, 1993; Maundu et al., 1999 (*A. hockii*); Noad and Birnie, 1989; Palgrave and Palgrave, 2002.

