# *Combretum aculeatum*

<div style="text-align: right">Combretaceae</div>

## Indigenous

COMMON NAMES: **Bajun:** Mlalozi; **Boran:** Chachalleh, Gabbe; **Gabra:** Chanchali, Hikho; **Orma:** Darsa; **Rendille:** Chachalleh; **Samburu:** Rikoyo; **Somali:** Eddi shabel, Eddi shibeel (Mandera); **Tharaka:** Muthigoora, Mucigi; **Turkana:** Ekabekebeke.

DESCRIPTION: A deciduous **scrambling shrub with weak branches** to 4 m (occasionally to 8 m). BARK: Grey or reddish brown. LEAVES: Usually pale green, **small, 4–7 cm**, wider at the rounded tip, which may be notched, **hairy both sides, only 4–6 pairs of veins**, very clear below. On older twigs the **leaf stalk becomes a hooked spine**, to 2 cm long. FLOWERS: Yellow-white, fragrant. FRUIT: Small, **green–yellow–brown with 5 papery wings**, almost round, to 2 cm, tip notched, on a thin stalk to 1 cm.

ECOLOGY: The northernmost of the tropical African *Combretum*, found from the Atlantic to the Red Sea and in East Africa. Common in *Acacia–Commiphora* bushland along watercourses. A shrub of the semi-arid areas of Kenya, often in loamy clay soil, in woodland or bushed grassland, widespread, 0–1,350 m. Agroclimatic Zones V–VI. Mature fruit in Machakos District in May–June.

USES: Firewood, fodder (leaves, seeds), edible seeds, medicine (leaves and roots), bee forage, fibre (twig fibres used in basketry), dead fence, local brooms, fish poison.

PROPAGATION: Seedlings, wildings. Produces root suckers.

SEED: Winged fruit with one seed inside. About 17,000 seeds per kg.
**treatment**: Open fruit to get the seed before sowing or soak in cold water for 24 hours.
**storage**: Fruits can be stored for some weeks but once the seed is extracted it should be sown immediately.

MANAGEMENT: Coppicing.

REMARKS: A preferred browse of wild and domestic animals. Leaves and seeds are good fodder for cows and can increase milk production. In the Sahel, and also in Tharaka, seeds have been reported to be edible.

FURTHER READING: http://www.worldagroforestrycentre.org/Sites/TreeDBS/AFT/AFT.htm; Beentje, 1994; Bein et al., 1996; Bekele-Tesemma et al., 1993; Blundell, 1987; von Maydell, 1990.