

# ***Flueggea virosa***

(*Securinea virosa*, *Phyllanthus virosus*)

Euphorbiaceae

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## **Indigenous**

**Am:** *Kechachilo*

**Br:** *Awagino*

**Eng:** *Snowberry tree*

## **Ecology**

A widely distributed species in Africa, from Senegal to Somalia and south to Namibia, and in the southern Arabian peninsular, Madagascar, Pakistan and east to Japan and Timor. In Ethiopia, this shrub is found mostly in open Acacia-Combretum woodlands or riverine forests on alluvial flats, on black-cotton soil and well drained rocky slopes. It is widespread in Dry and Moist Bereha and Dry, Moist and Wet Kolla and Weyna Dega agroclimatic zones, 120–2,000 m.

## **Uses**

Firewood, fish traps (branchlets), medicine (roots, bark), food (fruit).

## **Description**

A deciduous much-branched shrub usually 1–2 m, occasionally a tree to 7 m. **BARK:** Red-brown, smooth, later rough. Branchlets and leaf stalks purple-red. **LEAVES:** Simple and alternate, very variable to 6 cm, wider at the tip which may be notched, grey below. **FLOWERS:** Male and female trees. Small, green-yellow, sweet-scented in leaf axils; male flowers in clusters but only one or two female flowers. **FRUIT:** Small white berries, only 5 m across but edible and sweet.

## **Propagation**

Seedlings, wildings and cuttings.

## **Seed**

**Treatment:** Not necessary but seed that has passed an animal gut has better germination than other seed.

**Storage:**

## **Management**

A fast-growing shrub.

## **Remarks**

In Ethiopia, an infusion of the roots is taken with meat soup as a cure for malaria. The bark contains tannin and is used to treat diarrhoea and pneumonia. The slender branchlets are used to make fish traps.



Photo: Patrick Maundu

