

Ptaeroxylon obliquum

Ptaeroxylaceae

Indigenous

- Common names: Eng: sneezewood; **Samb:** mwandala.
- Ecology: Found in a variety of habitats in South Africa, low-altitude woodland to evergreen montane forest, often with Juniperus. A tree of evergreen forests in the West Usambara Mountains.
- Uses: Firewood, timber, medicine (sawdust).
- Description: A shrub or tree 5-16 m high. BARK: pale grey or white, smooth when young, rough and dark with age, becoming longitudinally fissured and flaking. LEAVES: compound, opposite with a slightly winged **leaf stalk** with 3-7 pairs of leaflets. Leaflets unequal sided, dark green, about 2.5 cm long, tip rounded or notched, on a stalk to 2.5 cm. FLOWERS: male and female flowers produced on different trees with young leaves. Flowers **white or pale** yellow, sweet scented, beside leaves; petals yellow, anthers orange-yellow. FRUIT: a capsule, about 2.0 x 1.5 cm, grey-brown, splitting into two to release a pair of winged seeds, persistent on tree.
- Propagation: Seedlings, root suckers.
- Seed info.: No. of seeds per kg: about 30,000. Seeds winged. Germination is good and fast,
- treatment: not necessary.
- storage: can retain viability for only a few months at room temperature.
- Management: Fairly fast growing; coppicing.
- Remarks: Smoke from the burning wood is used as a traditional pesticide for stored grains in West Usambara and as a medicine for headache. The sawdust is pungent and irritating but sometimes used as a snuff to cure headaches.

