

Grewia bicolor

Juss.

Malvaceae

+ Synonyms

Common Name:

General Information

Grewia bicolor is a deciduous shrub or a tree; it usually grows 2 - 10 metres tall, but exceptionally is up to 14 metres[299, 398].

A multi-purpose tree, it is often harvested from the wild as a local source of food, medicines and materials. The tree is sometimes grown as an ornamental[398].

Known Hazards

None known

Botanical References




Range

Tropical Africa - semi-arid areas from Mauritania to Eritrea and Somalia, south to Namibia, Botswana and northern S. Africa; through Arabia to India.

Habitat

Dry deciduous woodland, thickets, Commiphora-Acacia bushland, wooded grassland, and along rivers and streams[299, 398]. It is usually found on poor soils, preferring calcareous soils, at elevations from 800 - 2,000 metres[398].

Properties

Edibility Rating	
Medicinal Rating	
Other Uses Rating	
Habit	Deciduous Tree
Height	7.00 m
Growth Rate	Slow
Pollinators	Bees
Cultivation Status	Ornamental, Wild

Cultivation Details

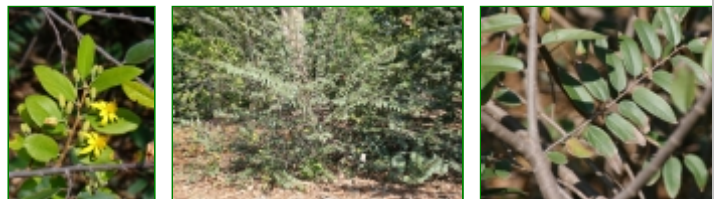
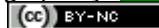
A plant of the semi-arid tropics, where it is found at elevations from 800 - 2,000 metres. It grows best in areas where annual daytime temperatures are within the range 20 - 28°C, but can tolerate 15 - 35°C[418]. It prefers a mean annual rainfall in the range 400 - 900mm, but tolerates 200 - 1,100mm[418].

The plant is often found on sandy and rocky soils and red clay soils in the wild[299]. Prefers a pH in the range .5 - 7, tolerating 5 - 7.5[418]. Established plants are drought tolerant[299].



Cultivated plant at the Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, Miami, Florida, USA.

Photograph by: [scott.zona](#)



A slow growing plant[299].

In some areas, such as Kenya, the plant can flower virtually all year round[299].

An extremely variable plant, it hybridizes freely with *Grewia monticola* in the wild[299].

The plant coppices well and also produces suckers[299, 398].

Edible Uses

Fruit - raw[299, 398]. The fully ripe fruit has a sweet flavour but is sharp on the tongue[398]. Only the pulp is eaten, the seeds are discarded[398]. The ripe fruits can be lightly pounded in a grain mortar, soaked in water, squeezed, the juice is filtered and then drunk as it is or added to porridge[299, 398]. The juice can also be fermented and made into an intoxicating drink[299, 398]. The round, orange then black fruit is about 5mm in diameter[398].

The mucilaginous leaves and fibres from the leaf are used as a binding agent in sauces[299].

The fresh leaves are made into a kind of tea[299].

The bark or leaf fibres are used in the preparation of sorghum beer to make it clean and to remove bitterness[299].

Medicinal

The plant has a wide range of applications in African traditional medicine[299]. Modern research has shown the presence of a range of medically active compounds including the triterpenes lupeol and betulin, and triterpene esters; alkaloids including harman[299].

The harman alkaloids may be linked to the plants use as a tranquillizer[299].

The bark and other plant parts contain farnesol, which has sedative activity and is antagonistic to the stimulant effect of caffeine; farnesol also enhances the effects of barbiturates[299].

A methanol extract of the root has shown antibacterial activity against *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Bacillus subtilis*, *Escherichia coli* and *Pseudomonas seruginosa*[299].

The root is used as a tranquilizer[299]. A cold infusion of the root is drunk to treat anaemia, chest complaints, cold, diarrhoea, snakebites, mental illness, hernia and female infertility[299].

A poultice of the root is applied on pustulent skin lesions[299]. A decoction of the root is given in case of a delayed afterbirth. The powdered root bark is applied on burns[299]. The juice, or a decoction of the inner bark of the roots is applied on wounds. A syrup prepared from the roots is rubbed onto swollen legs[299].

The roots are pounded, soaked in cold water and the infusion drunk to treat anaemia, chest pains, snakebite, colds, diarrhoea and infertility in women[398].

The bark is chewed and put on wounds as a bandage[398].

The bark is used as a vermifuge, diuretic and laxative, and to treat boils and sores, intestinal inflammation and syphilis. A macerate or decoction of the bark is credited with both inebriating and tranquillizing effects, and is also taken to counter fatigue. The bark is applied in case of itching[299].

The wood is credited with anthelmintic activity[299].

A decoction of the leaves is drunk and put into baths against pain in the chest, after which sap from pounded roots is rubbed on the patient[299].

Other Uses

The bark is used to clarify muddy water[299].

The leaves and ash from burnt leaves are sometimes used as soap and for cleaning garments[299].

The bark fibre is made into cordage and is also used for weaving[299].

The sticks are woven into baskets[299].

The wood is hard, strong and elastic[398]. It is used for building poles, withies, walking sticks, clubs, pegs, bows, carrying beams and rakes[398]. It is used for carving, is hollowed out to make bowls and boards, and the stems are made into picture frames. Twigs from the tree are used by water diviners to locate underground water[303].

The wood is used for firesticks, fuel and is made into charcoal[299, 398].

Propagation

Seed - best sown as soon as it is ripe. The seed germinates better if it is first scarified by carefully abrading the seed coat to better allow ingress of water[398].

Cuttings. Those taken with a heel root more easily, with a success rate of up to 60%[299].

Root suckers.

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Message:

Captcha: if i have 3 bananas, and i eat them all, how many bananas did i just eat?

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