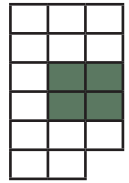


Juniperus procera

Cupressaceae



Indigenous

Am: *Tid*

Eng: *African pencil cedar*

Or: *Gatira, Hindessa*

Ecology

A valuable timber tree indigenous to Ethiopia and eastern Africa highland forests, 1,500–3,300 m. It does best in high-rainfall areas but can survive quite dry conditions once established. It is the largest juniper in the world. It performs well in Moist and Wet Weyna Dega and Dega agroclimatic zones.

Uses

Firewood, timber (floors, roof shingles, pencils, joinery), poles, posts, medicine (bark, leaves, twigs, buds), shade, ornamental, windbreak.

Description

An evergreen tree about 40 m with a straight trunk, although often fluted. A pyramidal shape when young. The foliage is finer and more open than cypress. **BARK:** Thin grey-brown, grooved and peeling with age. **LEAVES:** Prickly, young leaves to 1 cm, soon replaced by scale-like mature leaves, blue-green, triangular and closely overlapping on the branchlets. **FRUIT:** Male cones small and yellow with pollen, female purple-blue fleshy “berries” about 8 mm, the pulp containing 1-4 hard seeds.

Propagation

Seedlings, wildings — often numerous.

Seed

Mature brown to purplish black fruit collected from the crown. Spread fruit in a thin layer on a floor for drying. Then crush the fruit with a mortar and pestle. Sieve and winnow to separate seeds from the rest of the cone. Germination rate 20–70% within 25–80 days. 40,000–50,000 seed per kg.

Treatment: Not necessary.

Storage: Seed can be stored in airtight containers for some time if dried properly.

Management

Fairly fast growing in the open but otherwise slow. Prune and thin trees for timber and poles. The tree takes at least 30 years to grow to maturity.

Remarks

Does not grow well alongside crops. It regenerates well and deserves high priority in reforestation. The wood is termite resistant. The tree is now rare due to over-exploitation. Although belonging to the cypress family, this subgroup has no dry cones like *Cupressus*.



Photo: Patrick Maundu

