

***Newtonia buchananii***

Fabaceae (Mimosaceae)

**Indigenous****STANDARD/TRADE NAMES:** *Newtonia*.**COMMON NAMES:** **Kikuyu:** Mukui; **Meru:** Mukui; **Taita:** Makuruma, Mofu, Mkufi; **Taveta:** Mseri.

**DESCRIPTION:** A tall deciduous tree to 40 m with fine feathery leaves, rather flat topped. In forest valleys the tree can have a clear trunk. **BARK:** Smooth, light grey, large trees with **strongly fluted buttresses**. **LEAVES:** Bipinnate like *Acacia*, **12–23 pairs of pinnae**, the leaflets very numerous, **tiny and light green when young**. The leaf stalk has tiny glands between the opposite pinnae. Branchlets with rust-brown hairs. **FLOWERS:** Clusters of erect **cream spikes to 18 cm, fading brown**. **FRUIT:** Thin straight **brown pods 15–30 cm, splitting open on one side only** to set free **distinctive red-brown seed to 7 cm with a wing all round**.

**ECOLOGY:** A large spreading tree of lowland and upland rainforest, riverine, mist and swamp forest. Widespread as far south as South Africa. The tree can be found from the coast to the central districts of Kenya. Conspicuous in eastern Mt Kenya, Embu, Meru, Thika, Taita and Taveta. Also common in Karura Forest and around Chania Falls, Thika, Mbololo Hill and Kasigau Forest in riverine and swamp forest, 600–2,200 m. Agroclimatic Zones II–VI (riverine). Flowers almost throughout the year in Central Province.

**USES:** Firewood, timber (cabinet work, wagons, bridges), boat building, fodder (leaves), shade, ornamental, mulch, nitrogen-fixing.

**PROPAGATION:** Seedlings, wildings. Produces root suckers.

**SEED:** About 5,300 seeds per kg; germination rate 60–70% within 30–40 days. Collect from the tree crown immediately pods turn brown, sun dry and shake out the seeds.

**treatment:** Not necessary.

**storage:** Retains viability for at least a few weeks at room temperature if kept free from insects. Add ash to reduce insect damage.

**MANAGEMENT:** Fairly fast growing once established; needs care at establishment phase.

**REMARKS:** The brown to red-brown heartwood is durable in water and is used for canoes on Lake Victoria.

*N. paucijuga* (**Digo:** Mleha; **Giriama:** Mbwaga zembe, **Swahili:** Mche) is a species of the coastal forests, for example in Arabuko-Sokoke Forest where it grows in all types of clay. It produces good-quality timber for carving and other purposes, and also bee forage. This tropical African genus with about a dozen species is known for its hard woods.

**FURTHER READING:** Beentje, 1994; Noad and Birnie, 1989; Palgrave and Palgrave, 2002; Mbuya et al., 1994; Katende et al., 1995; Albrecht, 1993; Dharani, 2002.

