

## Vernonia myriantha (V. subligera)

*Compositae*

Indigenous

Common names: Hehe: mtogoto; **Nguu**: mteli; **Rangi**: seese; **Samb**: mhasha; **Suku**: mgumambu.

Ecology: A tall woody shrub found in open areas of moist and dry montane forests. It may form bush thicket and is a colonizer of disturbed land and abandoned cultivation. In Tanzania it is found in Usambara, Arusha, Ngorongoro, Kilimanjaro, Iringa, and Mufindi, 1,600-2,400 m.

Uses: Firewood, medicine (leaves, roots), mulch, soil improvement.

Description: A shrub or multi-stemmed tree, 3-4 m, but may reach 6 m, stout stems. **BARK**: grey, marked with leaf scars, fibrous, stems with hairs. **LEAVES**: alternate, very **large**, up to 20 cm long and 10 cm across, the **edge toothed, grey-white hairy below**, usually without a stalk and **leafy growths at the base**. **FLOWERS**: large, loose **heads of pale mauve, white or pink** flowers up to 60 cm across. **FRUIT**: minute, brown, with tufts of bristles, persisting a long time on the plant.

Propagation: Cuttings, seedlings.

Seed info.: No. of seeds per kg: about 850,000.

treatment: not necessary.

storage: can retain viability up to a year.

Management: A fast-growing, coppicing shrub which can be planted along contour ridges and grass strips and is cut for mulching/green manure.

Remarks: It is a good indicator of soil fertility. Leaves of *Coleus* sp. and *Rumex usambarensis*, together with Vernonia, are used to treat fever in malaria.

