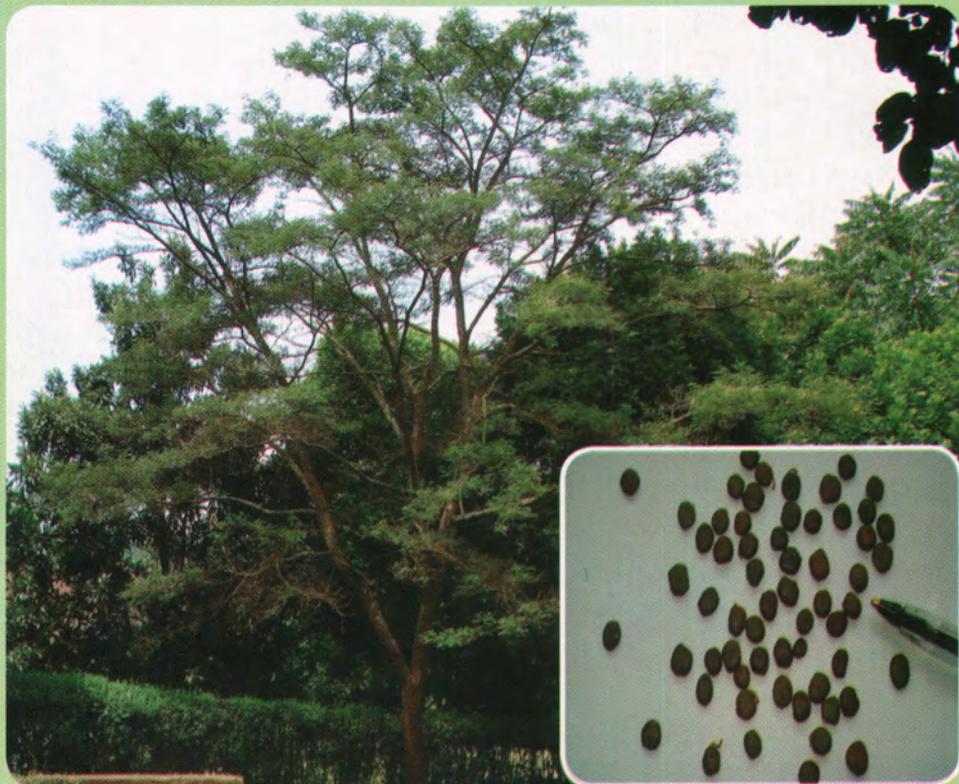


Leaflet No. 22

Tree Seed Information Leaflet



Acacia polyacantha



Kenya Forestry Research Institute

June 2009

Species: *Acacia polyacantha* Willd. ssp *camphylacantha* (A.Rich.) Brenan

Family: Mimosaceae

Common name: Falcon's claw acacia

Local names: Mugaa (Kikuyu)

Ogongo, Suahowe, Swaruri (Luo)

Kumukokwe (Luhya)

Kivovoa, Musewa (Kamba)

Mkengewa (Swahili)

Description: *Acacia polyacantha* is a tree growing up to a height of 20m with an open canopy and straight bole. Bark is ash-grey to yellow brown and deeply grooved in old trees. Thorns are hooked, brownish with black tips and occurring in pairs. Leaves are feathery with small narrow leaflets. Flowers are large cream-white spikes up to 12cm long, 2 or 3 occurring together. Pods are brown straight and flat with pointed tips.

Distribution: Wide spread in wooded grassland and riverine forest, between 200 and 1800m above sea level often in poorly drained soil. It is an indicator of high water table. It is common along Thika-Murang'a road, Kisumu, South Nyanza, Narok, Taita Taveta, Machakos and Kilifi.

Flowering and fruit development: Flowering occurs in April to June. Pollination is by insects and seed maturity takes about 5 months. Seed collection is between October and March depending on the area.

Seed collection method: The mature brownish pods are collected from the crown of standing trees by spreading a net/canvas sheet under the tree and shaking the branches using hooks to release the pods.

Seed extraction, cleaning and drying: Pods are sun dried for about two days and then threshed lightly with sticks to release the seeds. After extraction, seeds are cleaned by hand sorting, winnowing or sieving to remove impurities. Seeds are then sun dried to required moisture content of less than 10% for storage or distribution.

Number of seeds per kg: There are 14,000 to 16,000 seeds per kilogram depending on provenance and weather conditions of the seeding season.

Seed storage: Seeds can be stored in airtight containers (glass or plastic jars, or aluminium packets) in a cool dry place for up to 2 years with no significant loss of viability.

Seed sowing and germination: Seeds germinate within 10 to 20 days after sowing. For good germination, soak the seeds in hot water and leave to cool overnight. The average germination rate of mature and healthy seed lot is 75%. The expected number of seedlings per kg of seed is about 10,000.

Seeds are sown by broadcasting thinly and evenly on a seedbed containing sand or a mixture of sand and soil. They are then covered with a thin layer of soil. The seedbed is then covered with a light mulch (dry grass) to keep it moist. Watering is done regularly (morning and evening) checking daily for any emergent seedling. Mulch is removed immediately germination starts. The young seedlings are transplanted (pricked out) when they are large enough to handle (4-5 leaves). Transplanting can be to polythene tubes or other potting containers filled with soil. Seedlings are planted out after 4 to 6 months when they are about 30cm tall.

Uses: The wood of *Acacia polyacantha* is used for timber, firewood, charcoal, tool handles and farm implements. Other uses include edible gum, fodder, bee forage, shade and ornamental purposes.



For more information contact

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