

Ocotea kenyensis

Lauraceae

Indigenous

Kf: *Majo, Najo*

Or: *Derersa, Gigicha*

Sd: *Soecho*

Ecology

A very common intermediate and upper-storey tree, especially in Sidamo region. Also found in humid and semi-humid highland evergreen forests in Moist and Wet Weyna Dega agroclimatic zones of Wolega, Sidamo, Ilubabor, Kefa, Gamo Gofa and Bale, 1,500–2,600 m.

Uses

Firewood, timber (furniture, panelling, flooring), carvings, medicine (roots, bark).

Description

An evergreen much-branched tree, about 10 m, mature trees reaching 25–30 m, the bole straight and 80 cm wide at the base. **BARK:** Grey when young, then dark red-brown and rough, flaking into large pieces. **LEAVES:** Alternate, large oval or quite narrow, about 7–14 cm long, without hairs, young leaves shiny red, later leathery, shiny green, edge strongly wavy, tip blunt, narrowed at the base to a short, flexible stalk, 8–10 pairs uneven side veins only clear when dried. **FLOWERS:** Male and female separate, a few small flowers on a hairy stalk, about 5 cm, beside leaves, green-white-yellow. **FRUIT:** Long oval, green, to 2 cm, containing 1 seed, one-third of fruit inside a cup-like bract, roughly hairy.

Propagation

Seedlings.

Seed

The tree produces plenty of seed, but the fruit may be attacked by insects.

Treatment: Not necessary.

Storage: Sow immediately after extraction. Storage in moist sawdust can prolong the lifespan of the seed a little.

Management

Fast growing, coppicing.

Remarks

Bark, leaves and wood are fragrant and aromatic but unlike camphor. Although not termite resistant, the timber is of high quality — one of the best for furniture and carving. The tree can best be propagated by use of root suckers. Birds eat the fruit.



