

Scientific name: *Erythrophleum suaveolens* (Guill. & Perr.) Brenan.

Family: Leguminosae.

Conservation status: widely distributed and locally common in semi-deciduous forest, riverine or gallery forest, and forest margins on moist soil. In some areas roots and bark may be over-harvested for the medicinal plant trade. Not assessed by the IUCN Red List.

Common names: ordeal tree, red-water tree, sasswood (English), Ihi (Igbo), Obo, Erun-obo (Yoruba), Oginni, Oginyi (Edo).

Fruits/seeds: flat, slightly curved pod, rounded at both ends and attached almost at right angles by a stout stalk, containing 6 – 10 hard black seeds.

Fruiting time: July – August.

Seed collection: pods split open to expose seeds. Fallen seeds can be collected from under the tree.

Type of seed: orthodox.

Sowing method: scarify seeds and stir in sulphuric acid for 7 minutes, observing safety precautions to protect hands and face. Sow immediately at a depth of 2cm.

Sowing medium: forest soil.

Germination period: 7 – 10 days.

Germination percentage: 70%.

Growth/development: seedlings require partial shade for optimum growth and can be planted out 2 months after germination. Saplings prefer an open position.

Notes: An important tree for reforestation, mixed plantations and agroforestry as it enriches the soil through nitrogen fixation and abundant leaf litter.