

*Acacia polyacantha* ssp. *campylacantha*

Mimosoideae

Indigenous

**English:** Falcon's-claw acacia, hook thorn

**Kunda:** Ngowe

**Nyanja:** Ngowe

**Senga:** Ngobe

**Tumbuka:** Ngobe

**Ecology:** Widespread throughout Africa and found all over Zambia except on the nyika plateau, usually on dambo margins, in woodlands by rivers; sometimes as pure stands but often with other *Acacia*.

**Uses:** Firewood, **timber** (farm tools), posts, gum (edible), medicine (leaves and roots), fodder (pods, leaves, seeds), ornamental, **nitrogen fixation, soil improvement**, dyes, tannin (gum), live fence.

**Description:** A deciduous tree to 20 m, the **feathery foliage** giving an open, light canopy. **BARK:** grey-brown, scales or knots, old trees deeply grooved. **THORNS:** small and hooked, tips black. **LEAVES:** feathery, with numerous leaflets, each one small and narrow, leaf stalk hairy. **FLOWERS:** in large **cream-white spikes**, 2–3 together, each to 12 cm, fragrant, August–December. **FRUIT:** dark brown pods, tip pointed, flat and smooth, to 18 cm long, explode to set free 6–8 flat round seeds, June–September.

**Propagation:** Seedlings, wildings, direct seeding.

**Seed:** Seeds prolifically. No. of seeds per kg: 14,000–16,000. Good seed germinate in 10–20 days. Germination rate 60–90%.

**treatment:** Soak in hot water and allow to cool for 24 hours.

**storage:** Seed can be stored if kept cool, dry and insect-free.

**Management:** Pollarding, coppicing.

**Remarks:** A useful and widely available tree which should be planted more often. The wood is termite-resistant. The heartwood is red-brown but difficult to work. Moderately fast growing. It is an indicator of fertile soil and a high groundwater-table. Roots are used for treatment of gonorrhoea and snakebite. The bark is used for treatment of sore-throats and diarrhoea.

