

# *Albizia versicolor*

# *Mimosoideae*

## Indigenous

- Common names: Bende: masaka; Eng: poison-pod albizia; Fipa: masaka; Goro: moi; Iraqw: moi; Lugu: mnyanza, msazawi; Mate: mtulanzila; Nyam: mkindwanzagamba; Nyat: mughanga; Nyir: munyinga; Rangi: mringa; Samb: mchano, mkinua; Suku: mkingu; Swah: mchanidovu, mkenge, mnduruasi; Zigua: mkingu.
- Ecology: It extends from Kenya and Uganda in the north to Natal in South Africa. Common in deciduous woodlands, bushlands, wooded grassland throughout the *Brachystegia* areas and miombo. Prefers well-drained soils and a high watertable, 150-1,700 m.
- Uses: Firewood, charcoal, timber (small boats), tool handles, utensils (mortars), medicine (roots, bark), beehives, nitrogen fixation.
- Description: A medium to large deciduous tree with a short trunk to a light spreading crown, usually 5-15 m. Young branchlets and leaf stalks have rust-brown hairs. BARK: rough grey-brown-black, deep wide fissures. LEAVES: compound, only 2-4 pairs of stalks with 3-6 pairs large stiff leaflets, each 2-6 cm long and 1-4 cm across, wider at the tip which is usually flattened with a small, sharp point; hairs above, densely hairy below, veins raised. FLOWERS: large half-spherical heads, red stamens on green-yellow stalks. FRUIT: large pods at the top of the tree, red at first, later shiny red-brown, flat and straight up to 27 x 6.5 cm, containing 4-6 flat seeds about 1 cm across.
- Propagation: Seedlings, root suckers.
- Seed info.: No. of seeds per kg: 6,000-8,000. Germination is good, completed after 30 days.
- treatment: fresh seed requires no treatment. Stored seeds should be soaked in cold water for 6 hours before sowing,
- storage: can be stored for long periods if kept dry and insect free
- Management: Fairly fast growing; lopping, pollarding.
- Remarks: High potential for agroforestry and a useful timber in miombo woodlands and for soil-fertility improvement maize/bean/wheat fields in the Matengo highlands. Seeds and pods are poisonous to livestock. The wood is light to moderately heavy but not very durable. It is easy to work for household utensils such as mortars, although the sawdust is irritating to the nose. Bark and roots contain saponins with medicinal uses. Roots containing saponins can be boiled with water and used instead of soap.

