

Indigenous

**Common names:** **English:** Mountain bamboo **Kwamba:** Luma **Luganda:** Banda **Lugishu:** Madega **Rukiga:** Migano **Rukonjo:** Mulonge **Runyanakore:** Gishumbo **Runyoro:** Museke **Rutoro:** Museke **Sebei:** Tegandet.

**Ecology:** The bamboos are mostly tall tree-like grasses. They are mainly plants of moist montane tropical forests but reach into warm temperate zones. Many flower after long periods. The indigenous bamboo, *Arundinaria alpina*, is still found at higher elevations on Mt. Mufumbiro, Mt. Elgon, Ruwenzori Mts. and the Echuya highlands (2,700-3,000 m). "Widespread in the highlands of the Impenetrable (Bwindi) Forest. Although it grows naturally at high altitudes it will grow quite well at much lower altitudes if well watered.

**Uses:** Buildings, poles, utensils, tool handles, food (shoots), soil conservation, ornamental, fencing, basketry.

**Description:** A very large **hollow-stemmed** grass, **usually 6-8 m** but can reach 12-25 m. **STEMS:** smooth, woody, hollow, yellow-brown, growing from swollen underground stems (rhizomes). Whorls of thin branches grow at the upper nodes between stem sections. Stems can reach 7-10 cm in diameter. **LEAVES:** grow **from branchlet nodes**, pale green **up to 20 cm long and 1 cm wide, the tip long and thin;** rough to the touch because of short hairs. Leaves appear from a **large yellow leaf sheath to 50 cm long, with purple hairs.** **FLOWERS:** rarely seen, in heads 10-20 cm long. After flowering the plant dies down.

**Propagation:** Rhizomes, natural regeneration, seedlings (possible but rare).

**Seed:** Flowers at long intervals after which it dies,

**treatment:** not required,

**storage:** sow as soon as collected.

**Management:** Very fast growing in optimal conditions; needs to be controlled. Seed watered daily will germinate readily. Transfer to seed boxes when 2.5 cm high. Plant out after 8-12 months. Offsets from one-year-old stems can be planted out and will develop quicker than seedlings.

**Remarks:** Susceptible to termites and borers. In Tanzania, especially in Iringa, the bamboo has been tested for use as water pipes (replacing steel or plastic pipes). The food value is only appreciated by the Bagishu living on Mt. Elgon.

