

*Brachystegia bussei*

## Caesalpinioideae

Indigenous

**English:** Large-leaved brachystegia**Nyanja:** Mkongolo, msale**Senga:** Mkongolo

**Ecology:** A tree which often dominates Central African miombo woodlands, extending north to Tanzania and south to Mozambique, 240–1,700 m. Typically it is found on coarse soils but also on red soils, either in pure stands or with other *Brachystegia* spp. and *Julbernardia globiflora*. It grows in woodlands, plateaux, escarpments and valleys in Eastern Province where it often indicates shallow or eroded soils.

**Uses:** **Timber** (joinery, roof beams), medicine (roots, bark), gum (resin).

**Description:** A deciduous, slender tree to 20 m, crown rounded to flat, branches loose and drooping. **BARK:** looks **smooth, grey-purple**, but irregular thin pieces flake off. When cut, it exudes a brown sticky gum. **LEAVES:** compound, **3–4 pairs of leaflets**, widely spaced on a stalk to 8 cm long, **largest leaflets at tip**, each one to 6 cm, oval to lance-shaped. **FLOWERS:** in **small heads, 5 x 5 cm**, green-white, October–December. **FRUIT:** smooth **woody pods**, to 15 cm, with a sharp tip, covered with grey-white powder, ripe July–August. Each pod contains 1–3 flat brown seeds.

**Propagation:** Natural regeneration (wildings), seedlings, root suckers.

**Seed:** No. of seeds per kg: 1,500. Germination very good and uniform.

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

**storage:** Can retain viability for up to a year if kept free from insects.

**Management:** Coppicing, pollarded.

**Remarks:** The timber is heavy with an attractively patterned light brown heartwood; saws easily but is not durable. This species has the largest leaflets among the indigenous species. In the past, the inner bark of *Brachystegia* was used to make barkcloth.



Last pair of leaflets