

# Butyrospermum paradoxum subsp. niloticum

*Sapotaceae*

Indigenous

**Trade name:** Shea-butter tree.

**Common names:** **Ateso:** Ekunguru **English:** Shea-butter tree **Kakwa:** Komure **Lugbara:** Kamiro, komere, komoro **Lugwere:** Kinakongole **Luo A:** Yaa, yao **Luo L:** Imuru **Madi:** Awa.

**Ecology:** The only species in the genus, this tree is restricted to the dry savannah and grassed woodlands of north tropical Africa to the Sudan and across central Africa into Uganda. In Uganda it occurs in wooded grassland, often the dominant tree forming almost pure stands. It is most common on dry laterite slopes in North Eastern, Northern and North Western Regions in areas with less than 1,000 mm annual rainfall.

**Uses:** Firewood, charcoal, timber, food (seed), fodder, oil (cooking, soap, candles), shade, ornamental.

**Description:** A small to medium deciduous tree 13-20 m, much branched to a **dense rounded crown, the stout bole to about 4 m** before branching. Lower branches often fall to the ground, others twisted and thick, with leaf scars. **BARK:** easy to recognize: dark grey-brown-black, **thick and rough, deeply fissured into rectangular shapes like a crocodile skin.** **LEAVES:** crowded at the end of **very short thick branchlets**, covered with leaf scars. Young leaves reddish, hairy, becoming smooth, dark green and tough, oval-oblong about 20 cm long, tip rounded and base narrowed to a **long stalk** up to half the length of the leaf blade, about 10 cm. **FLOWERS:** small, **cream-white and fragrant appearing in dense clusters on short branchlets** when the tree is almost bare. **FRUIT:** a large **round green berry**, 4-6 cm long. Inside sweet pulp surrounds a **single shiny brown seed with a white scar on one side.**

**Propagation:** Seedlings; they produce long taproots, so raise in pots where root pruning is easily done or, preferably, sow directly on site.

**Seed:** Gather the fruit together and allow the pulp to decompose (3-4 weeks) or dry in the sun until the seeds separate out.

**treatment:** not necessary.

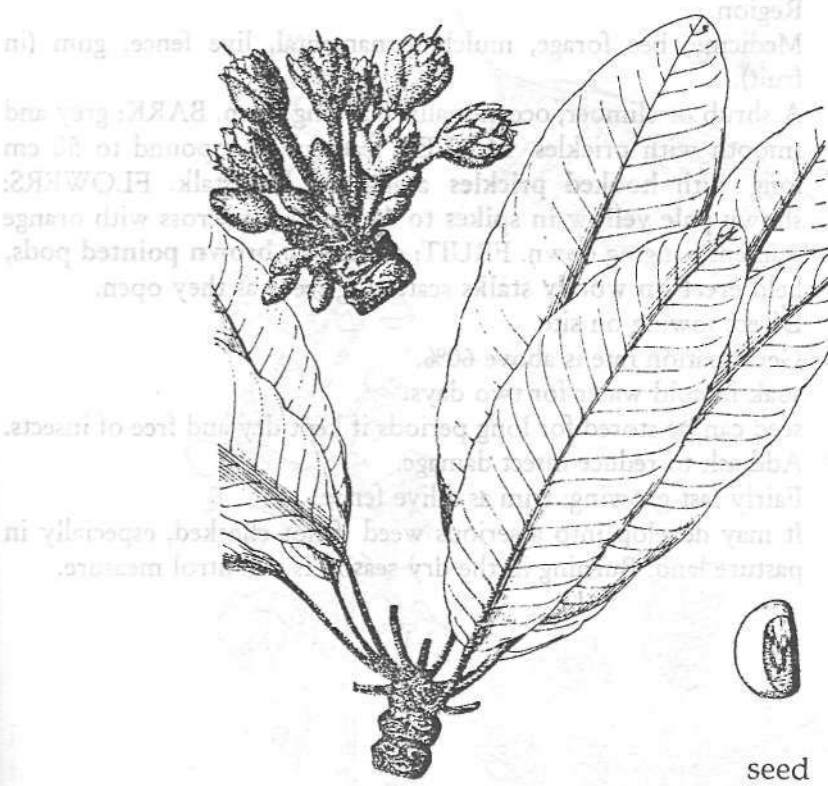
**storage:** very oily and lose viability quickly; sow as soon as collected.

**Management:** The tree takes 30 years to mature. On good soil with proper initial care it may bear fruit in 15-25 years.

**Remarks:** The tree survives annual fires and the wood is hard and termite resistant. Shea butter or oil is extracted from the seed kernels by roasting, grinding and then boiling the seeds. In Uganda the Nilotic people use it for cooking and in West Africa it is important in the local economy for cooking as well as commercially for making soap, candles and margarine.

A thorny shrub widely naturalized in Africa in medium- and high-  
montane areas, 900-2,100 m. In Uganda commonly cultivated as a  
live fence or growing wild in moist forest.

Ecology:



User:

Description:

Propagation:

Seed:

Treatment:

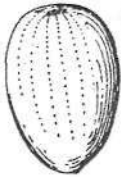
Storage:

Management:

Remarks:



seed



fruit

