

Cajanus cajan

Papilionoideae

South East Asia

Common names: Eng: pigeon pea; **Mwera:** lupelemende; **Nyam:** mblazi; **Pare:** mshughu; **Samb:** mbaazi; **Swah:** mbaazi.

Ecology: The genus is now recognized to have 32 species. It reached West Africa and the West Indies early as a food crop. It is a hardy, drought resistant and widely adaptable crop growing in a variety of soils provided they are not saline or waterlogged, 0-3,000 m.

Uses: Firewood, food (fruit and seeds), fodder (foliage), bee forage, mulch, green manure, nitrogen fixation, soil conservation, soil improvement.

Description: A slender shrub 2-5 m, annual or perennial, becoming woody with age. **BARK:** brown, thick stems ribbed and densely hairy. **LEAVES:** compound with **three leaflets, leaflets hairy white below**, 2-8 cm long. **FLOWERS:** usually **yellow, in terminal groups**, the **large petal has red lines** outside, buds yellow, sticky. **FRUIT:** curved pods about 5 cm long, hairy with about **4-5 green-grey seeds**.

Propagation: Direct sowing.

Seed info.: Seeds highly susceptible to insect attack. Germination rate very high.

treatment: soak in cold water for one day.

storage: stores well if kept dry, cool, and insect free.

Management: Fast growing; weeding is necessary.

Remarks: A useful, high-yielding crop for dry areas. Improved perennial "tree types" are available. It is, however, susceptible to pests and diseases. Root extracts are used for stomach ache and as an aphrodisiac.

