

Cajanus cajan

Papilionaceae

S.E. Asia

Common names: **English:** Pigeon pea **Luganda:** Mpinnamiti **Luo:** Kapenda **Runyoro:** Nkuuku.

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. In Uganda it is a common agricultural crop in North Western and Northern Regions but can also grow in other Regions, except areas that are too wet, 600-1,800 m.

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

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, streaky. **FRUIT:** curved pods about 5 cm long, hairy with about 4-5 **green-grey seeds**.

Propagation: Direct sowing on site.

Seed: 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. Add ash to reduce insect damage.

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. It is a useful nurse crop for tree seedlings.

