

Calodendrum capense

Rutaceae

Indigenous

Trade name: Cape chestnut.

Common names: English: Cape chestnut.

Ecology: A tree widespread in Africa from Uganda to southern Africa. In Uganda it occurs only rarely in scattered patches of woodland in Mbarara District. It has, however, also been planted as a beautiful garden and avenue tree in Kampala.

Uses: Firewood, charcoal, timber, poles, tool handles, bee forage, shade, ornamental (avenue tree), mulch, windbreak.

Description: A semi-deciduous tree to 20 m with a shapely spreading crown, **bare for several months. BARK: grey, smooth**, young branchlets hairy. **LEAVES:** opposite, simple, often bunched together, **broadly oval and wavy to 14 cm**, midrib and veins very clear underneath. **FLOWERS:** large and showy, **pink-white in erect heads**, abundant but erratic, at the ends of branches, **crimson gland dots**, purple-brown anthers on the long stamens. **FRUIT: knobbly to softly spiny becoming hard**, capsules ("chestnut") hang on the tree then set free **black angular seeds**.

Propagation: Seedlings, wildings.

Seed: No. of seeds per kg: about 900. Seeds are large and easy to collect. Germination is good with fresh seeds.

treatment: not necessary; float to separate empty bad seed from heavy viable seed.

storage: seed can be stored up to one year if kept insect free.

Management: Slow growing in most conditions; coppices while young, pollarding.

Remarks: Monkeys and squirrels eat young capsules with seed while on the tree. Not good for intercropping due to heavy shade when in leaf, but might be of value in banana plantations.

