

Cassia singueana

Caesalpinioideae

Indigenous

English: Winter cassia

Nyanja: Mtanthanyerere, kalusapwe

Ecology: Widespread in drier areas of tropical Africa. In Zambia, it occurs on termite mounds, in most types of woodland, wooded grassland and bushland all over the country. In Eastern Province, it is mainly found in open woodlands, frequently on termite mounds.

Uses: Firewood, **medicine** (leaves, bark, roots), tannin.

Description: A deciduous shrub or small tree, usually 4–5 m but occasionally up to 11 m, with a light open crown. **BARK:** red becoming grey-brown and rough. **LEAVES:** compound with **4–10 pairs oval leaflets**, fresh green, 2.5–5.0 cm long. **Between each leaflet pair there is a conspicuous gland on the stalk.** Leaflets are round at the tip and base and have a very **short stalk.** **FLOWERS:** striking **deep yellow**, fragrant, in large **loose sprays to 15 cm**, on the bare tree (April–September). The coloured **sepals are rounded**; 3 different groups of stamens. There are **glands on the flower stalks, stalks 2–4 cm long.** **FRUIT:** A **narrow cylindrical pod to 25 cm, sharply pointed and narrowed between seeds.** Pods hang in clusters and ripen the following year, yellow when ripe. **Seeds circular, flat, only 5–6 mm with a small mark (the areole).**

Propagation: Seedlings, wildings.

Seed: –

treatment: not necessary.

storage: –

Management: Coppicing.

Remarks: A good medicinal tree for many ailments (e.g. stomach pains, syphilis). The pods are said by some people to be edible either raw or boiled and made into a gruel, while others regard them as poisonous.

