

# Cordyla africana

# Papilionoideae

## Indigenous

- Common names:** Chag: mbachanga, mpachama, mroma; Eng: wild manga  
Gogo: mkwata; Lugu: mgwata; Mwera: mtondo, ntondo;  
Swah: mgwata, mroma, mroo, mvoo, mtigonzi, mumbwe.
- Ecology:** Found at low altitudes in hot areas, especially in riverine fringes or forests, and also in swamp forests from Kenya to South Africa. In Tanzania it is widespread, especially in Kilimanjaro, Kilosa, Lindi and on Zanzibar island.
- Uses:** Timber (construction), poles, beehives, tool handles, carving (drums, stools, mortars), food (fruit), shade, gum.
- Description:** A large spreading deciduous tree 9-25 m tall with rounded crown. **BARK:** greyish-brown and rough, thick and grooved. **LEAVES:** alternate, compound, with 11-28 pairs of leaflets plus a terminal leaflet, each one oblong to 2.5 cm, dark green with a short hairy stalk. Held up to the light unusual clear dots and streaks can be seen. **FLOWERS:** semi-spherical heads of yellow-orange stamens up to 2.5 cm long on branched stalks. They appear in axillary sprays or at axils, with the new leaves in July-October. No petals but sepals, ovary stalked. **FRUIT:** unusual pods, yellow when ripe, oblong to spherical, thin walled, about 6 cm long. The 3 flat seeds are contained in fleshy pulp and appear in November-December. The sticky pulp smells like beans.
- Propagation:** Seedlings, suckers.
- Seed info.:** Fresh seed germinates easily.
- treatment:** not necessary.
- storage:** viability is short.
- Management:** Pollarding, lopping, coppicing. Reduced growth and yield if grown outside areas of natural distribution.
- Remarks:** The fruit is very tasty and is eaten both raw and cooked. It has a very high vitamin C content. The heartwood is a rich brown colour and the timber is hard but susceptible to borers.

