

*Cordyla africana*

## Papilionoideae

Indigenous

**English:** Wild mango

**Nyanja:** Mtondo

**Senga:** Msika

**Tumbuka:** Msika

**Ecology:** Occurs at low altitudes in hot areas, often in riverine forest and swamps, from East Africa to South Africa. In Eastern Province, common in Luangwa Valley along rivers and streams.

**Uses:** **Timber** (construction, tool handles, carving, drums, stools, mortars), poles, beehives, **food** (fruit), shade.

**Description:** A large spreading deciduous tree 9–25 m tall with a 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, hang on branched stalks. They appear in axillary sprays or in 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–January. The sticky pulp smells like beans.

**Propagation:** Seedlings, suckers.

**Seed:** Fresh seed germinates easily.

**Seed:** Not necessary.

**storage:** Viability is short.

**Management:** Pollarding, lopping, coppicing.

**Remarks:** The fruit is very tasty and is eaten both raw and cooked. It has a very high vitamin C content. The heartwood has a rich brown colour and the timber is hard but susceptible to borers.

