

Indigenous

Common names: **English:** Forest croton **Luganda:** Musogasoga **Luo A:** Chetwingo **Rukiga:** Mwatansale.

Ecology: A forest tree found in East Africa and South Africa. A common tree in Uganda found growing in thickets and forest edges in moist lowland forests and also abundant in gaps in moist, lower montane forests. Widely distributed except in Kotido and Moroto Districts. Often seen in old Eucalyptus plantations.

Uses: Firewood, charcoal, timber, poles, shade, ornamental (avenue tree).

Description: A shrub or small tree 7-13 m (up to 30 m) with a weak trunk to a narrow crown—in forest. **BARK:** thin grey-brown, smooth, becoming darker and rough. It smells of pepper. **LEAVES:** widely oval 6-14 cm long, with **5-7 spreading veins, tip pointed**, base often rounded to a stalk up to 10 cm. **Edge sharp or round-toothed** (with glands). **Young leaves with pale brown hairs, later almost smooth**, old leaves orange before falling. **Leaves NOT SCALY BELOW** as in other Crotons. **FLOWERS:** green-cream, small in **heads 10-30 cm** (all male, all female or mixed flowers). **FRUIT orange-red** hairy capsules **less than 1 cm**, oval with 3 sections. Conspicuous red clusters of fruit.

Propagation: Seedlings (sow seed in pots), wildings.

Seed: Collect capsules before they open and lay on polythene sheeting. Put in the sun and collect seed after capsules have split open,

treatment: not necessary,

storage: store in cool dry place.

Management: Fast growing.

Remarks: Along with other species, this tree has been planted with crops in Mbale and Kabale Districts. Yields good, light and cheap timber. The wood is soft and easily worked and is reported to burn even when green. Various parts are said to be toxic and bark has been used as a fish poison (South Africa). There are many medicinal uses for leaves and bark reported from Kenya and South Africa.

Croton sylvaticus (C. oxypetalus)

Euphorbiaceae

