

Eriobotrya japonica

Rosaceae

China, Japan

Common names: **Chag:** mtangawizi, shitunda; **Eng:** loquat; **Lugu:** msambwawa kizungu; **Samb:** msambia.

Ecology: A small evergreen tree very widely planted in its native China, Japan and north India; also in the Mediterranean, and now doing well in the Tanzanian highlands, 1,500-2,400 m. It is drought resistant once established, but prefers moderate to high rainfall. Very commonly planted in the Arusha and Kilimanjaro areas.

Uses: Firewood, poles, posts, carving, food (fruit), bee forage, shade, ornamental, mulch, windbreak, jam, syrup (fruit), boundary marker (Arusha and Kilimanjaro).

Description: A compact tree to 7 m, branching close to the ground. **BARK:** grey and rough, young stems hairy. **LEAVES:** stalkless, **dark green, shiny above, woolly hairs below**, to about 35 cm long, the tip pointed and the edge slightly toothed; young leaves paler, foliage in upward-pointing tufts. **FLOWERS:** **cream-white, scented**, in **pyramidal** tufts at the end of branches, flower buds covered with **golden-brown hairs**. **FRUIT:** **yellow, egg-shaped to 3 cm**. brown-black seeds inside, flesh acid-sweet to taste.

Propagation: Direct sowing, seedlings, wildings.

Seed info.: No. of seeds per kg: about 600.

treatment: not necessary.

storage: seed does not store well. It should be sown while still **fresh**.

Management: Fairly fast growing; pruning.

Remarks: Grafted trees are available; they make stronger growth, remain smaller; but mature and produce fruits faster. Seeds are poisonous and should be removed before cooking.

