

Euphorbia tirucalli

Euphorbiaceae

Tropical Africa

English: Finger euphorbia, rubber hedge euphorbia**Kunda:** Nkhaze**Nyanja:** Nkhazi, mduze**Senga:** Nkhazu, nkhasi**Ecology:** A succulent shrub which may have come from India but is now widespread and naturalized throughout Africa. It is frequently planted in Zambia and used as a hedge in villages all over Eastern Province, even around graveyards. Occurring in a wide variety of habitats, it can survive in arid conditions.**Uses:** Medicine (young branches), **live fence**.**Description:** A dense succulent bush or straight-stemmed tree to 6 m. **Dense green branchlets**, finger sized, smooth and cylindrical, function as leaves. **LEAVES:** small, present on young shoots, soon fall. **FLOWERS:** yellow-cream and stalkless, in dense clusters. **FRUIT:** 3-part capsules, hard, purple-green, less than 1 cm across.**Propagation:** Cuttings strike readily.**Seed:** Not important.**treatment:** –**storage:** –**Management:** Coppicing; trim and top prune to make a hedge.**Remarks:** Medium to fast growing. Latex is very poisonous and dangerous to the eyes. If it does get in the eyes, human milk is said to be an antidote. Medicine from the plant must be used with extreme care due to its toxicity. It is believed that planting *E. tirucalli* on a termite mound will result in disappearance of termites from that mound. Planting *Euphorbia* cuttings next to *Eucalyptus* and other termite-prone species is said in Rwanda and Tanzania to keep away termites.