

# Ficus thonningii

*Moraceae*

## Indigenous

- Common names: Chag: mkuu; Eng: strangler fig; **Fiome:** tiita; **Gogo:** mlumba; Ha: mshasha, mtenza, mtoma mtenza, munyam-wonyu, Maasai: oreteti; Mako: ndola; **Ngoni,** mlandege, ndengo; Nyam: mlumba, mugumo, mla-ndaeje; **Nyir:** mugumo-wa-ntwike; Rangi: mumu-muzura; **Samb:** mvumo; Swah: mrumbapori.
- Ecology: Among the commonest figs in Tanzania. Widespread **in** Africa, often starting as an epiphyte on another tree, **then** buttressed or multi-stemmed from the growth of **aerial** roots. Widespread in upland forest, open grassland and riverine areas from 1,000-2,500 m. It is always left standing in cropland. Grows on a variety of soils.
- Uses: Medicine (bark), fodder, mulch, shade, ornamental, fibres glue, live fence, ceremonial.
- Description: A deciduous tree to 25 m. **BARK:** thin, **grey and smooth** often many **aerial stem roots**. **LEAVES:** very variable, oval to 12 cm, often smaller, **apex mostly rounded, base** rounded or tapering, shiny green, young leaves pale and hairy below **FRUIT:** in **axillary clusters** at **the** ends of **branches,** prominent on the bare tree, **round** to 1.5 cm, smooth or bumpy, **yellow or purple-red when ripe**. Two **small** leafy bracts **remain** at **the** base of **the** fig.
- Propagation: Large cuttings normally used.
- Seed info.: No. of seeds per kg: about 90,000.
- treatment: not necessary
- storage: seeds should not be stored.
- Management: Fast growing from cuttings and better than seed.
- Remarks: The fruit is eaten by small mammals and birds—thus dispersing the seed. The species should be protected **from** browsing when young. Usually not planted near buildings as the roots may crack foundations. Like all figs the extensive root system penetrates into the smallest crack **in** the soil or buildings where water might accumulate. Fig roots probably have a stronger suction force to draw **in** water than other trees—a reason why parasitic plants do not grow on fig trees.

