

Flacourtia indica

Flacourtiaceae

Indigenous

- Common names:** Bende: msunga; Chag: msambuchi; Fipa: mwanga; Goro: tsapenai; Hehe: mgola; Iraqw: sokhaimo; Lugu: mgora; Mate: mbilipili, mngfunga; Mwera: mtawa; Nyam: mpuguswa, msingila; Nyat: musingisa; Rangi: mtundukarya; Suku: mpuguswa; Zara: mtawa; Zigua: mgola; Zinza: msungusu.
- Ecology:** Widespread in tropical Africa, this tree occurs in woodland from sea level to about 1,600 m. Common in Brachystegia woodland, it can grow in a variety of climates and soils but prefers sandy soil, a high watertable and a lot of sunlight
- Uses:** Firewood, timber, farm tools, fodder (leaves), food (fruit), medicine (leaves, bark, roots), live fence.
- Description:** A deciduous shrub or tree usually 3-5 m in height, but sometimes reaching 10 m. The trunk may be very spiny with characteristic branched masses. **BARK:** usually pale grey, powdery yellow at first, rather smooth, but may become brown-dark grey and flaking, revealing pale orange patches, the branches unarmed or armed with large spines. Leaves and branches with or without dense soft short hairs. **LEAVES:** variable in size, oval to round, to 12 cm, edge toothed, becoming leathery, 4-7 pairs veins clear on both surfaces, stalk to 2 cm. Leaves turn brilliant red-purple before they fall. **FLOWERS:** small, cream, fragrant. Male flowers with very many yellow stamens, female flowers with a divided spreading style. **FRUIT:** Red-purple-black, round and juicy but acid, to 2.5 cm across, hanging on the bare tree, containing up to 10 seeds, hard and flat. Persistent style set one-sided on fruit.
- Propagation:** Seedlings (natural regeneration).
- Seed info.:** No. of seeds per kg: about 200,000. Germination is slow, completed after 9 weeks.
- treatment:** crack, pierce or nick the hard seed coat to improve germination.
- storage:** can be stored at room temperature up to 6 months.
- Management:** Coppicing.
- Remarks:** A tonic is made from the dry leaves. It can be used as a live fence and windbreak.

