

Indigenous

Common names: **English:** Lagos rubber tree, African wild rubber **Luganda:** Nkago
Runyoro: Musanda.

Ecology: An African rain-forest tree similar in both distribution and appearance to bush rubber. In Uganda, this species is found in the middle storey in Budongo, Bugoma and Mabira Forests where it is abundant but generally it is rarer than *F. africana*.

Uses: Firewood, charcoal, shade, rubber (latex).

Description: A forest tree to 40 m with a straight cylindrical bole and **no buttresses**. **BARK:** smooth and thin. The latex is cream-coloured and abundant. It dries to a small ball if rubbed between the fingers, leaving the fingers clean. **LEAVES:** broadly oval, opposite, dark green and leathery. Underneath there are clear pits where the lateral veins make an angle with midrib. **FLOWERS:** yellow-white, fragrant, in short dense groups, the lobes of the corolla shorter than the flower tube. **FRUIT:** a pair of woody, flat follicles to 30 cm, usually less, blunt-ended. Seeds with a tuft of long white hairs at one end.

Propagation: Seedlings, wildings.

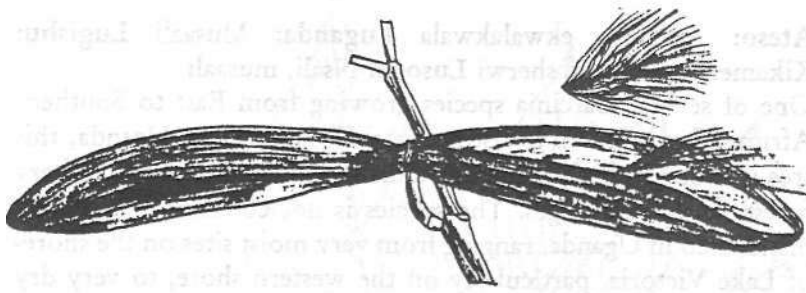
Seed: Plenty produced in the fruits which should be collected at maturity,

treatment: not necessary.

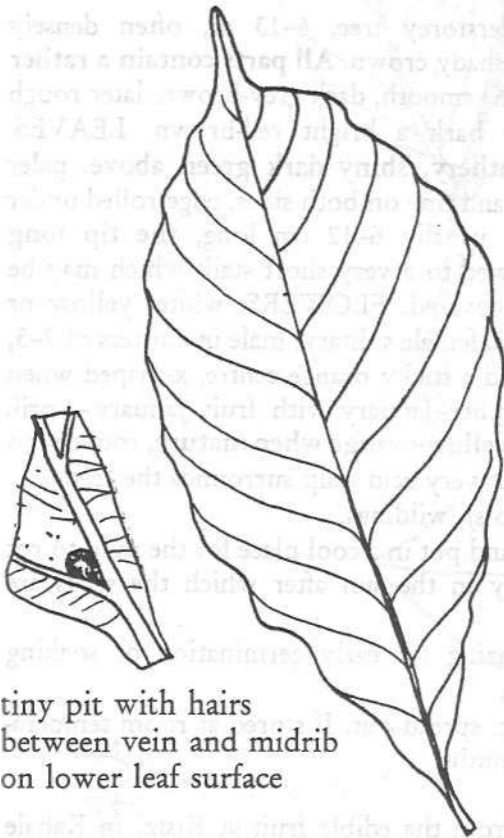
storage: can be stored up to two months.

Management: Fast growing.

Remarks: *F. elastica* produces a high-quality rubber and can be grown in plantations for tapping of rubber. During World War II it was much tapped in Mabira, Budongo and Bugoma Forests. The first serious botanical expeditions to Uganda were searching for rubber trees—with hopes of an economic crop when *F. elastica* was found. The discovery of this species in Uganda discouraged people from planting *Hevea brasiliensis*. At present no tapping of African wild rubber is being done.



hairy seeds



tiny pit with hairs
between vein and midrib
on lower leaf surface

