

Hexalobus monopetalus

Annonaceae

Indigenous

Nyanja: Mkandanchembele, mkambendula

Ecology: A shrub or small tree, widespread in drier parts of tropical Africa from the Sudan to South Africa in woodlands, at forest edges and in rocky places. In Zambia, it occurs throughout the country, particularly in plateau and hill miombo but occasionally in other woodland types as well.

Uses: Firewood, timber (tool handles), poles, **food** (fruit), medicine (leaves, bark and roots).

Description: A semi-deciduous shrub or understory tree, 4–8 m, branching horizontally to a rounded crown, often quite dense. **BARK:** grey-brown, smooth, becoming flaky with rectangular scales; characteristic short hard leaf bases where the leaves break off (higher than usual). **LEAVES:** simple, stiff, **long oval, 3–11 cm, tip broadly rounded**, base more or less rounded to a short stalk, dense hairs on the midrib below, **veins clear above**, olive green above, yellow green below. **FLOWERS:** solitary or in clusters beside leaves, **not stalked**, 6 cream-yellow petals, crinkly, spider-like, **joined at the base**, 2.5 cm long. Characteristic **red-brown buds** only open after leaf fall just before rains, April–August. **FRUIT:** 1–3 **cylindrical capsules** (like short fingers), to 3.5 cm, soft and fleshy, narrowed between seeds, **red-black when ripe**. Each section has several brown seeds in edible flesh, March–May.

Propagation: Seedlings, wildings.

Seed: –

treatment: Not necessary

storage: –

Management: Coppicing.

Remarks: The reddish heartwood is moderately durable. The fruits are popular, especially with children, although they usually contain insects. A species to be managed in indigenous woodlots for its fruits and medicinal uses.

