

*Khaya nyasica* (*K. anthotheca*)

Meliaceae

Indigenous

**English:** Red mahogany  
**Nyanja:** Mubaba, m'lulu  
**Senga:** Mubaba  
**Tumbuka:** Mubaba

**Ecology:** A tall forest tree which grows from Tanzania south to Mozambique. It is found throughout Zambia, at medium to low altitudes, normally beside rivers and it has been widely planted for timber around settlements in Eastern Province. It grows best in deep well-drained soils but can withstand seasonal flooding.

**Uses:** Firewood, **timber** (quality furniture), medicine (bark), bee forage, shade.

**Description:** A semi-evergreen tree with straight trunk up to 30 m before branching; buttressed at the base, the crown dense and rounded. **BARK:** grey-brown-black and thick, **later flaking**. **LEAVES:** compound, **2–7 pairs leaflets, each leaflet to 17 cm**. **FLOWERS:** small and white, in heads, often hidden by leaves, fragrant, September–November. **FRUIT:** a **dry capsule, to 5 cm across**, breaks into 4–5 sections on the tree, scattering 30–60 pale flat **winged seeds**, June–November.

**Propagation:** Seedlings, wildings, direct seeding.

**Seed:** Produces 30–60 seeds per fruit. No. of seeds per kg: 2,000–3,800. Germination is very good and fast.

**treatment:** –

**storage:** Can store for some time.

**Management:** Coppicing, pruning.

**Remarks:** An indigenous fine hardwood that is easy to grow. Its present heavy exploitation by pitsawyers is worrying. Planting in school compounds and on farm should be encouraged. The timber is pale pink when fresh but red-brown on exposure. It is the most popular local timber for furniture as it is easy to work, polishes well and is also durable; resisting borers and termites. The bark is used to treat colds. Oil from seeds is rubbed on the scalp to kill lice.

