

Kigelia africana

(*K. aethiopum*, *K. pinnata*)

Bignoniaceae



Indigenous

Anu: *Ja*

Eng: *Sausage tree*

Ga: *Duduba*

Ecology

Widespread in Africa, this tree is found in wet savannah and along rivers in arid areas of Moist and Wet Kolla and Bereha agroclimatic zones in Gojam, Ilubabor, Kefa and Gamo Gofa, 500–1,850 m.

Uses

Firewood, timber (dugout canoes, yokes), local honey beer (fruit), medicine (fruit, bark), fodder (flowers), dye (boiled fruit).

Description

A semi-deciduous tree with a rounded crown, to 9 m in open woodland but 18 m beside rivers. **BARK:** Grey-brown, smooth, flaking in round patches with age. **LEAVES:** Compound, growing in threes, at the end of branches, few leaflets, each broadly oval, very rough and hard, up to 10 cm, often with a sharp tip, edge wavy. **FLOWERS:** On long rope-like stalks 2–3 m. Horizontal, reddish branches, in threes, bear upturned trumpet flowers, petals folded and wavy, dark maroon with heavy yellow veins outside, an unpleasant smell. **FRUIT:** Large grey-green “sausages”, 30–60 cm long. Hanging stalks remain on the tree. Several kilos of fibrous pulp contain the seeds—only released when fruit rots on the ground.

Propagation

Seedlings, direct sowing at site. Cut ripe fruit in half lengthwise and put cut side down on a patch of rich, moist soil. After a few weeks there will be many seedlings.

Seed

Not a prolific seeder. Poor germination rate and slow to germinate. 3,400–6,000 seed per kg.

Treatment: Not necessary.

Storage: Seed should not be stored.

Management

Slow growing, Coppicing.

Remarks

The tree is most well known for its sausage-like fruit which is opened up lengthwise and used to ferment traditional honey beer. Unripe fruit is poisonous. The tree does not compete with crops.

