

Maesopsis eminii

Rhamnaceae

Indigenous

Common names: Ha: mheru; Haya: muhumula; **Kere:** masira, msira, musira; Zinza: msira.

Ecology: A large tree indigenous to East, Central and West Africa. In Tanzania very common on islands in Lake Victoria and in the Bukoba region. It grows in wet tropical and wet montane climates. Requires deep fertile sandy loams and grows best below 2,700 m.

Uses: Firewood, timber (furniture, light construction), poles, veneer/plywood, fodder (fruit), shade (tea and coffee), ornamental.

Description: A leafy semi-deciduous tree 10-30 m, often a clear bole to 10 m, the **branches rather horizontal**, the crown flattened when young but more rounded with age. BARK: pale grey-brown, branchlets dotted with breathing pores, grooved with age. LEAVES: appear compound but alternate on the twig, on **stalks to 1 cm**, each **long and shiny**, pointed, **to 14 cm**, the edge with **characteristic well-spaced rounded teeth**. FLOWERS: small and green in heads beside leaves. FRUIT: oval, to 3 cm long, fleshy and yellow, turning **purple**, with 1-2 hard seeds.

Propagation: Seedlings, wildings, direct sowing.

Seed info.: No. of seeds per kg: 500. Low germination rate (20-55%).

treatment: none, soak in cold water for 12 hours, or nick seed.

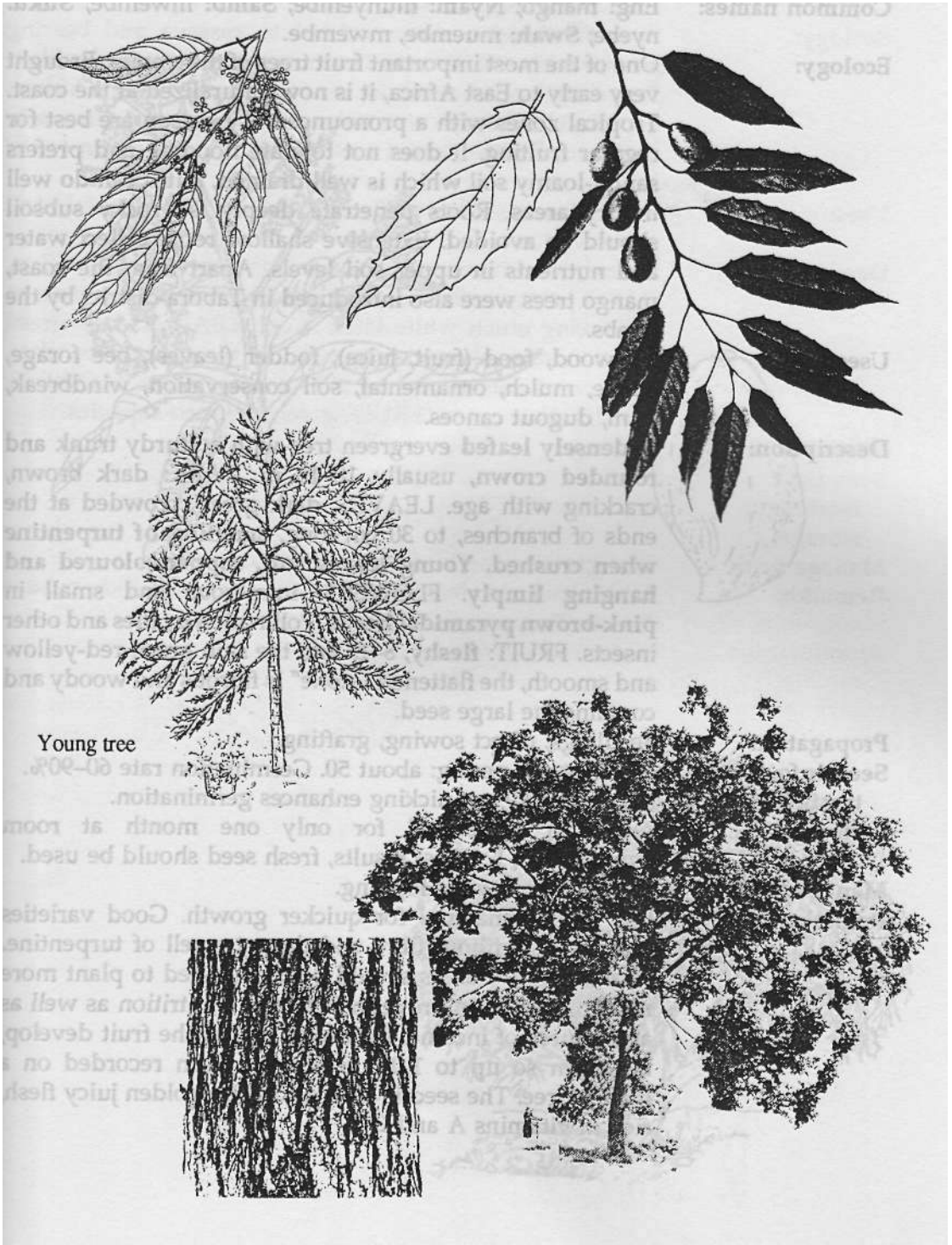
storage: can be stored for up to 5 months.

Management: Fast growing; coppicing.

Remarks: After its introduction in the Usambara mountains (Amani) the tree has become a weed there. It is one of the fastest growing indigenous trees and can be harvested in 25-30 years, but the timber is poor and rots quickly.

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Young tree