

# Mangifera indica

*Anacardiaceae*

Northern India, Burma

Common names: Eng: mango; Nyam: munyembe; **Samb:** mwembe; Suku: nyebe; Swah: muembe, mwembe.

Ecology: One of the most important fruit trees of the tropics. Brought very early to East Africa, it is now naturalized at the coast. Tropical zones with a pronounced dry season are best for regular fruiting. It does not tolerate flooding and prefers sandy-loamy soil which is well drained, but it can do well in dry areas. Roots penetrate deeply, so rocky subsoil should be avoided. Extensive shallow roots collect water and nutrients in upper soil levels. Apart from the coast, mango trees were also introduced in Tabora district by the Arabs.

Uses: Firewood, food (fruit, juice), fodder (leaves), bee forage. shade, mulch, ornamental, soil conservation, windbreak. gum, dugout canoes.

Description: A densely leafed evergreen tree with a sturdy trunk and rounded crown, usually 10-15 m. BARK: dark brown, cracking with age. LEAVES: dark green, crowded at the ends of branches, to 30 cm long, **smelling of turpentine when crushed. Young leaves soft, copper-coloured** and hanging **limply**. FLOWERS: numerous and small in pink-brown **pyramidal** heads. Pollination by flies and other insects. FRUIT: fleshy, 8-15 cm, the skin green-red-yellow and smooth, the flattened "stone" is fibrous and woody and contains the large seed.

Propagation: Seedlings, direct sowing, grafting.

Seed info.: No. of seeds per kg: about 50. Germination rate 60-90%.

treatment: not necessary but nicking enhances germination.

storage: seed can be stored for only one month at room temperature. For best results, fresh seed should be used.

Management: Fairly fast growing; lopping.

Remarks: Use grafted material for quicker growth. Good varieties have fruits without fibre and do not smell of turpentine. Farmers in dry areas should be encouraged to plant more mango trees to improve their family's nutrition as well as as a source of income. Relatively few of the fruit develop, but even so up to 1,000 fruit have been recorded on a mature tree. The seed is surrounded by golden juicy flesh, rich in vitamins A and C.

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