

**Markhamia lutea (M. platycalyx, M. hildebrandtii)****Bignoniaceae****Indigenous**

**COMMON NAMES:** **Embu:** Muu; **Kamba:** Kyoo; **Kikuyu:** Muu; **Luhya:** Lusiola; **Luhya (Bukusu):** Kumusoola; **Luo:** Siala; **Meru:** Muu, Mung'uani; **Nandi:** Mobet; **Somali:** Sogdu; **Turkana:** Ekokwait.

**DESCRIPTION:** An upright evergreen tree with a narrow irregular crown, usually 10–15 m. **BARK:** Light brown, finely cracked. **LEAVES:** Compound, pinnate, with 7–11 leaflets, often in bunches, thin and wavy, each leaflet to 10 cm, wider at the tip. Often **round leafy outgrowths at the base**. **FLOWERS:** Bright yellow clusters, each trumpet-shaped, orange-red stripes in the throat, buds furry, splitting on one side. **FRUIT:** Long thin capsules, to 75 cm, hang in spiralling clusters, split on the tree to release many flat winged seeds. Mature seed is yellow-white, prematurely collected seed turns black.

**ECOLOGY:** A tropical African tree common in the Lake basin and highland areas, to 2,000 m. It will stand acid heavy clay soil, but not waterlogging; prefers red loam and has deep roots. Agroclimatic Zones II–III.

**USES:** Firewood (domestic as well as for tobacco curing), charcoal, timber, furniture, poles, posts, tool handles, walking sticks, boat building, banana props, medicine (leaves), bee forage, shade, ornamental, mulch, soil conservation, windbreak, ceremonial, boundary marking.

**PROPAGATION:** Seedlings, wildings.

**SEED:** The tree is a prolific seeder and seeds throughout the year in some areas. About 70,000–80,000 seeds per kg; germination 30–60% in 20–30 days. Timing is important for collection: pods must be mature, indicated by the pale yellow colour turning grey. Once the pods split the seeds are dispersed by wind. The pods are collected and dried in the sun to facilitate the opening and release of seed.

**treatment:** Not necessary.

**storage:** Seed does not store well at room temperature. Best to sow fresh.

**MANAGEMENT:** Fast growing, coppicing.

**REMARKS:** The species is widely used in western Kenya. The wood is fairly termite resistant.

*M. zanzibarica* (**Bajun:** Mchawanda; **Digo:** Mpalawanda; **Giriama:** Muchalanda; **Malakote:** Mchaanda; **Swahili:** Mtawanda; **Taita:** Mkenga) is a related species found mainly in dry forest and secondary bush at the coast. It is a smaller tree, often a shrub, with smaller flowers and fruit. It is used for poles, firewood, bows, arrows and tool handles. *Markhamia* is a mainly African genus with a few members in Asia.

**FURTHER READING:** <http://www.worldagroforestrycentre.org/Sites/TreeDBS/AFT/AFT.htm>; Albrecht, 1993; Backes and Ahenda, 1998; Beentje, 1994; Bekele-Tesemma et al., 1993; Blundell, 1987; Dharani, 2002; Katende et al., 1995; Kokwaro, 1993; Mbuya et al., 1994; Noad and Birnie, 1989.

