

*Markhamia obtusifolia*

## Bignoniaceae

Indigenous

**English:** Golden-bean tree  
**Kunda:** Kasanika  
**Nyanja:** Kasanika, msusankhwale  
**Senga:** Kapandaziche

**Ecology:** A shrubby tree of medium to low altitudes; north to Kenya and just into South Africa. It is found on a wide range of soils scattered all over Zambia from open woodland to dune scrub; most common in *Baikiaea* forest. Although bare many months, it is an attractive tree in flower.

**Uses:** **Timber** (tools, furniture), **poles**, medicine (fruit, roots), fodder (leaves), bark rope, bird traps (twigs, bark).

**Description:** A bushy deciduous shrub, usually 1–2 m but can reach 13 m. **BARK:** light brown–grey, smooth at first. Long strips are pulled off older plants for bark rope. **LEAVES:** compound, 5 pairs of leaflets plus 1 central leaflet, on a stalk to 8 cm long; leaflets rounded to 14 cm long, lower surface yellow, hairy; leafy shoots covered with long golden hairs; tree bare June–November. **FLOWERS:** showy yellow, red-brown lines on 3 of the 5 lobes, buds and stalks also hairy; a long flowering period, November–March. **FRUIT:** long, flat capsules, yellow-brown, hairy, to 85 cm, with a central ridge, split to release winged seeds. Fruits hang on the tree all the year.

**Propagation:** Seedlings, wildings.

**Seed:** No. of seeds per kg:  $\pm 70,000$ . Germination is good and completed after 2–3 weeks.

**treatment:** Not necessary.

**storage:** Use fresh seeds. Can retain viability for a short period (3 months) at room temperature.

**Management:** Coppicing.

**Remarks:** An attractive tree when in flower. The Nyanja name *msusankwale* means used for partridge (*nkware*) trapping. The wood is whitish, heavy and durable. *Markhamia acuminata*, with similar uses, is also found in Eastern Province. Its leaflets are pointed. Most *Markhamia* spp. can be grown with crops on farmland. The boiled root is used to treat backaches, body pains, and relieves stomach gas. Root powder is used to treat hookworm and snakebite.

