

Western Asia, Himalayas

**Common names:** **English:** Persian lilac **Luganda:** Lira **Lugbara:** Lira.

**Ecology:** A popular ornamental exotic long planted in the tropics and subtropics. It grows on most soils, both acidic and saline from the coast to 2,000 m. It has been recommended for fuel and pole production in dry areas being drought resistant. It grows well in drier areas of Uganda and is the common tree with foliage during the dry season in Moroto District. Popular also in Arua District.

**Uses:** Firewood, charcoal, timber (tool handles), poles, posts, medicine (bark), bee forage, ornamental, shade, windbreak.

**Description:** A small tree 5-6 m, but can reach 10 m, usually deciduous, with a thin trunk. **BARK:** grey, smooth, later rough and brown, branchlets dotted with breathing pores. **LEAVES:** bipinnate, on branched stalks, **to 40 cm long**, up to 6 pairs of pinnae and **3-9 leaflets**, each one bright shiny green, narrow to 8 cm, the **edge irregularly toothed, the tip long and pointed**. **FLOWERS:** fragrant in large **rounded clusters** to 25 cm, each flower with 5 pale purple-white petals and a **dark purple centre**. **FRUIT:** fleshy yellow-orange, oval to 1.5 cm, persisting on the bare tree. Each fruit contains a **stone** with 4-6 dark brown seeds inside.

**Propagation:** Seedlings, wildings, direct sowing on site.

**Seed:** A prolific seeder. High germination rate. No. of seeds per kg: 500-3,000. Sow in a seed bed then prick out seedling when large enough.

**treatment:** soak seed in cold water for 24 hours,

**storage:** seed can be kept for some time if stored in a cool place.

**Management:** Fairly fast growing; pollarding, lopping, coppicing, pruning.

**Remarks:** The berries are extremely poisonous to human beings, livestock and poultry. Leaves are not browsed by livestock. The tree is moderately termite resistant and provides quick shade and building poles. In good conditions, it grows so many suckers that it may become a weedy nuisance. It has insecticidal properties: an infusion of the leaves will control insect attack on vegetables.

