**Monodora grandidieri**

**Indigenous**

**COMMON NAMES:** Giriama: Mudzala simba.

**DESCRIPTION:** A shrub, scrambler or a small tree to 6 m.

**LEAVES:** Large, up to 8 x 20 cm, usually much smaller, 
base cordate (blunt) or slightly heart-shaped, leaf 
blade widening towards the tip then narrowing abruptly 
to a sharp tip. **FLOWERS:** Large, outer petals to about 
6 cm; borne singly on a long stalk arising from branch 
tips or sides; appearing with young leaves or sometimes 
before, yellow-white with pinkish to red streaks along 
the petals. **FRUIT:** Rounded or slightly elongate to 
about 4 x 7 cm, green with white marks.

**ECOLOGY:** A shrub of the eastern African coast found in 
evergreen forest, *Brachystegia* woodland, thickets, 
bushland, cashew nut plantations, 0-400 m. Agroclimatic 
Zones II-IV. Flowers in March and July, fruits in May 
and October at the coast.

**USES:** Bows, withies for building, edible fruit, medicine.

**PROPAGATION:** Seedlings, wildings.

**REMARKS:** The plant is much liked by elephants.

*M. myristica* (English: Calabash nutmeg; Luhya: 
Lubushi) is a large deciduous tree found in Kakamega 
Forest. Leaves are very large, to 30 cm or more, base 
rounded or slightly heart-shaped. Flowers large, yellow- 
white, solitary, outer petals to 10 cm. Fruit to 20 cm or 
more. It is mainly riverine in Kakamega Forest. The plant 
is a source of firewood and medicine. Fruits are said to be 
edible and elsewhere the seeds are used like nutmeg. The 
genus *Monodora* has about a dozen members, all of 
African origin.

A recently introduced tree, *Polyalthia longifolia*, or the 
mast tree, also in the family Annonaceae, is now the most 
popular ornamental in urban centres in 
the coastal part of Kenya. Originally 
from South India and Sri Lanka, this 
strikingly upright tree has a narrow, 
almost columnar, dense crown and 
drooping branches with shiny, 
long narrow leaves, making it an 
ideal choice for built-up urban 
environments where space is 
limited. It is a beautiful avenue 

**FURTHER READING:** Beentje, 1994.