

Monodora myristica

Annonaceae

Indigenous

Trade name: Calabash nutmeg.

Common names: **Luganda:** Nagomola **Lusoga:** Mukoza **Rutoro:** Mugema.

Ecology: Monodora is a tropical genus of the primitive custard apple family with about 15 species. This tree is typical of rain forest and occurs in all the lowland forest of Uganda in Central, Southern, Western and Eastern Regions.

Uses: Firewood, charcoal, food (roasted seed), ornamental.

Description: A deciduous forest tree 5-30 m tall, but usually 10-15 m, with a rounded crown giving heavy shade. **BARK:** grey with vertical ridges distinctly rounded. **LEAVES:** **oblong, often wider at the tip, 5-60 cm long and 3-20 cm across** (average 20 x 7), the tip shortly pointed, bent back and the base very rounded on a **thick 1 cm leaf stalk, purplish like the prominent midrib**. Very many side veins are raised below. **FLOWERS:** large and **single, hanging on stalks to 20 cm—a leafy bract grows from the stalk**. Outer 3 sepals narrow to 4 cm, pale green with dark red frilly edges, 3 large outer petals enclose 3 smaller inner ones. **Outer petals oval, 4–10 cm cream-yellow with dark red-brown spots and a frilly edge**, tip pointed; inner petals broadly oval, cream-white, with purple-brown markings fold over the flower centre like a lantern. There are very many stalkless stamens around the conical ovary. **FRUIT:** **globose, 13 cm across**, smooth and green becoming **brown and woody**, containing seeds in a fragrant pulp. Seeds 2.5 cm, shiny and edible.

Propagation: Seedlings (sow seed in pots), wildings.

Seed: The fruit must be ripe and dry before the seeds can be extracted. The dry fruit may disintegrate and scatter the seeds when they fall on the ground, or they have to be cracked open, seeds normally germinate readily but soaking in cold water for 12 hours may hasten germination.

treatment: sow as soon as collected. Seeds are oily and lose viability if stored.

Management: Pollarding, lopping, pruning. Branches should be cut back from time to time.

Remarks: This is a very attractive tree when in flower and when planted as an ornamental it should be allowed plenty of space. The roasted seeds are a potential food and firewood can be obtained by pollarding.

fallen pieces
of fruit

