

Pericopsis angolensis (*Afrormosia angolensis*)

Papilionoideae

Indigenous

Kunda: Muwanga
Nyanja: Muwanga
Senga: Mubanga
Tumbuka: Mubanga

Ecology: A medium-to-large tree typical of Central Africa, north to Tanzania and south to South Africa, and scattered all over Zambia. The timber is highly valued, hard and attractive; large trees are now rarely found. Trees are found in all the woodlands except mopane woodlands, preferring more fertile soils.

Uses: Firewood, charcoal, **timber** (construction, carving, quality furniture, floors), **poles, fence posts**, medicine (leaves, bark, roots), fodder (leaves, shoots), **nitrogen fixation**.

Description: A semi-deciduous tree usually 10 m, reaching 20 m; the bole rarely straight, branches spreading to an open crown. **BARK:** smooth and **pale grey-white** at first, darker later with irregular pieces **flaking off to show red-brown under bark**. **FLOWERS:** **pink-purple in sprays to 15 cm**; flower stalks and buds pale brown and hairy. **LEAVES:** **compound, 4–10 pairs plus a central leaflet, each one to 6 cm, oval, the tip rounded, blue-green**; September–November. **FRUIT:** Flat pods in distinctive heavy clusters, to 24 cm long, bright green then pale yellow-brown, with narrow wings on both edges. Inside are 1–3 flat orange-brown seeds, July–September.

Propagation: Seedlings, cuttings.

Seed: No. of seeds per kg: 3,000–3,500. Germination rate is very high and fast.

treatment: Not necessary.

storage: Can be kept viable for a long time if dry and free from insects.

Management: Pruning, coppicing.

Remarks: The strong wood has an attractive pattern, turns well and takes a high polish. Buried tool handles have been found and dated to about 100 years old, showing that this timber is extremely resistant to termites and borers. Leaves can be applied to wounds, including snake bites. This tree is often left in cultivated fields since it does not compete with crops.

