

Piliostigma thonningii (*Bauhinia thonningii*) *Caesalpinioideae*

Indigenous

- Common names:** Bende: mfumbe, mnsakansaka; Eng: camel's foot tree; Fiome: galapi; Fipa: nakifumbe, mfumbe, msindamboga; Goro: galapi; Haya: mtindambogo; Hehe: muhela, mkombalwike; Maasai: ol sagararmi, os sangararam; Mate: chitembe, titimbo; Mwera: mguwauwa; Nyam: mshindambogo, mtindambogo; Nyat: musasu; Samb: mgonambogo, msegesese, msegesese; Sangu: mkombalwike, muhela; Suku: mtindwa-mbogo; Swah: mkichikichi, mubamba-ngoma; Zigua: msegesese; Zinza: msindaga.
- Ecology:** A dense semi-deciduous small tree or shrub found all over sub-humid Africa from west to southern Africa in wooded grassland, usually 0-1,850 m, in various soils. In Tanzania it is found at the coast, in the Rift Valley, Sukumaland and in the Lake Victoria zone.
- Uses:** Firewood, charcoal, posts, timber (construction of houses and *boma*), food (pulp from pods, fresh bark, leaves), medicine (leaves, bark, roots, pods), fodder (pods, young leaves), bee forage, shade, ornamental, mulch, soil conservation, dye (bark, pod, seed), tannin, fibres, rope (bark, root fibres).
- Description:** A rounded tree 3-5 m, branches twisted (occasionally climbing). **BARK:** thick, dark and rough, fibrous within, dark red if cut. **LEAVES:** large and bi-lobed, a small bristle in the deep notch, leathery pale green to 12 cm long, lower surface brown, hairy in between many raised veins. **FLOWERS:** white, fragrant, in heads, 10-20 cm, male and female separate. **FRUIT:** very many flat brown and woody pods, 15-20 cm long, decaying on the ground to free many seeds. Pulp surrounding the seed can be eaten.
- Propagation:** Seedlings. Collect pods from the tree as soon as they turn brown. Seeds are soon attacked by insects. Sun dry pods, then cut and break them up in a mortar.
- Seed info.:** No. of seeds per kg: about 7,300. The tree produces many seeds with good germination rate after 60-75 days,
- treatment:** soak in cold water for 24-48 hours. Nick seed coat with a knife for best germination results,
- storage:** several years if kept dry, cool and insect free.
- Management:** Fairly fast growing on good sites; coppicing.
- Remarks:** A good tree for intercropping; often left in shambas and frequently growing with *Annona senegalensis*. Pods and seeds give a blue dye and roasted seeds black dye. Medicinal uses are important to rural people.

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