

Podocarpus latifolius (P. milanjanus)

Podocarpaceae

Indigenous

- Common names: Bara: laganehel; Chag: msoso, mtongoso, mtokosi, mtosi tawaso; Eng: podo; Fipa: mfulanyebele; Hehe muvembanyigo; Iraqw: dukmo, nuki; Kinga: mkensi; Lugu muanziri; Meru: mseso; Nyak: nyalulasi; Nyiha: siegi Rangi: mwarinyani; Samb: mse, mse-mawe, msena-mawe msekichanga.
- Ecology: The natural range for *Podocarpus latifolius* is from Kenya through Central Africa to South Africa. In Tanzania it occurs mainly in the wetter montane forests of Usambara Kilimanjaro, Pare, Mbulu and Southern Highlands (Iring) and Mbeya). It requires deep, fertile and well-drained soil and the climatic range is wet montane, 900-3,200 m.
- Uses: Firewood, timber (furniture, boxes), poles, plywood, medicine (roots), shade, ornamental.
- Description: A forest tree, to 35 m, evergreen, conical when young, the trunk large and buttressed in old trees. BARK: red-brown to grey-brown, narrowly grooved, peeling in long fibrous strips. LEAVES: spirally arranged at the tips of branches very shiny, curved, tough, to 15 cm, with a pointed tip larger and paler when young. CONES: male trees have small catkins, pinkish, to 5 cm; female trees produce soft fleshy "fruits" about 1 cm ovoid, green-purple with a grey bloom. The stalk below the foot is characteristic swollen, soft and red, 1-2 cm, soon falling. Woody seeds smaller than those of *P. falcatus*.
- Propagation: Seedlings, wildings.
- Seed info.: No. of seeds per kg: 2,000-2,300. Ideally seeds germinate in 30-40 days with a germination rate of 60-80%.
- treatment: remove the red swollen receptacle, then spread out the fruit. in the shade. Sow seed within 4 days to avoid loss of viability as seeds are very sensitive to drying out. Crack the woody seed shell to speed up germination.
- storage: seed can be stored for up to a year but only at very low temperatures mixed with damp sawdust in open containers
- Management: Slow-growing.
- Remarks: The tree is regarded as too slow growing for large-scale planting. The pale straight-grained timber is easy to work and polish and resistant to insect attack if treated.

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