

Rapanea melanophloeos (R. rhododendroides)

*Myrsinaceae*

Indigenous

**Trade names:** Mugaita, mulimangombe.

**Common names:** **Rukonjo:** Muongonyonye **Rutoro:** Musonganyonye **Sebei:** Sitoto.

**Ecology:** A widespread tree in upland forests right up to the moorlands of East Africa. In Uganda it grows in montane forests, sometimes mixed with bamboo and Podocarpus. It is a dominant with Hagenia in some areas.

**Uses:** Firewood, charcoal, timber (furniture), poles.

**Description:** An evergreen shrub or trees 5-16 m with a straight trunk. **BARK:** grey-white, lightly fissured, becoming grey-brown and thick. Young branches purple and rough with prominent leaf scars. **LEAVES:** clustered at branch ends, 5-11 cm long, wider towards the tip, shiny above with characteristic resin dots and lines near the margin when young, midrib and the short petiole red when young. **FLOWERS:** in clusters of 1-12, often appearing on old wood from scaly bumps, or below leaves on a small "cushion". Small flowers are stalked, petals yellow-white-green with black marks. **FRUIT:** rounded, purple-black, 5 mm across and 1 cm long.

**Propagation:** Regenerates very well naturally in montane forests forming almost pure stands. Direct sowing on site, wildings, seedlings.

**Seed:** Fruit collected whole and dried.

**treatment:** not necessary.

**storage:** the seeds are liable to insect attack. Add ash to reduce insect damage and store in sealed containers in a cool place.

**Management:** Coppicing, pollarding.

**Remarks:** Suggested for highland farmers for firewood plantations, as pure stands or mixed with other species. The wood is hard but attacked by borers so not durable in the ground.

