

Indigenous

- Ecology:** Widely distributed in riverine Brachystegia woodland, lowland forests, dry and wet montane forests of the highlands of eastern and southern Africa, 500-2,100 m. It is a characteristic feature of areas where there is ground water. Found in Uganda mainly in montane forests and preferring wet places and river banks.
- Uses:** Firewood, timber, utensils (grain mortars), beehives, medicine (bark, roots), bee forage, shade (in coffee), ornamental.
- Description:** A much-branched evergreen tree up to 35 m high with a straight bole reaching 1.5 m diameter and with a leafy, spreading crown. **It resembles mango**, but is more oval and less dense, branches often whorled. **BARK:** light brown or greyish-white with irregular fissures. **LEAVES:** thinly leathery, arranged in **whorls of 3-5 towards the ends of branchlets, shiny, dark green** above, 6-32 cm long and 1.5-7.5 cm wide, tip drawn out. If removed, thin **white latex** drips out. **FLOWERS:** small, **white, tubular, sweet scented**, in large **dense clusters, to 20 cm across**. **FRUIT:** rounded and smooth, about 1.3 cm across, green at first, changing to **blackish-purple** and wrinkled when ripe, 1-2-seeded.
- Propagation:** Easily grown from seedlings, wildings.
- Seed:** No. of seeds per kg: 4,500-5,000. Germination is fast and good, up to 80% after two weeks.
- treatment:** not necessary.
- storage:** can retain viability only for a short period (1 month) at room temperature.
- Management:** Quite fast growing; pollarding.
- Remarks:** It is already used in the highlands in coffee/banana fields. The wood is pale and light and very suitable for carving utensils and curios. A well-known medicinal tree: bark and roots contain the alkaloid reserpine which is used in the treatment of hypertension. Used in Uganda as a constituent of arrow poison.

