

Sesbania macrantha

Papilionoideae

Indigenous

Senga: Chizonga

Ecology: The genus *Sesbania* contains some 50 species which continue to fix nitrogen in quite difficult sites. Several are indigenous to Africa and this species extends from east to southern Africa. In Zambia it grows in riverine areas beside lakes Bangweulu, Mwense and Tanganyika and rivers Shambeshi and Luapula and along dambo margins. In Eastern Province it grows around dams and dambos. Very common in Luangwa Valley. It is found in acid and saline soils and tolerates both seasonal and permanent waterlogging.

Uses: Medicine, fodder (leaves), mulch, **nitrogen fixation, soil improvement.**

Description: A soft-wooded shrub, tall and straight, often unbranched in crowded stands to 6 m, otherwise low and spreading, multistemmed but stems hollow. Stems, leaf and flower stalks prickly. **LEAVES:** compound, **usually about 30 pairs leaflets** along the stalk, each one about 1–2 cm long. Leafy stipules at the base, about 1 cm. **FLOWERS:** **yellow, 9–12 flowers on a short stalk, the largest petal about 2 cm, spotted green outside, marked violet inside,** wide wing petals. **FRUIT:** a very **narrow curved pod 20–30 cm, only 5 mm across,** beaked, with 35–40 brown seeds in 1–cm sections.

Propagation: Direct sowing on site.

Seed: No. of seed per kg: 85,000–130,000.

treatment: Soak seed in cold water.

storage: Seeds can be stored.

Management: Very fast growing but short lived; lopping, pruning, short rotations.

Remarks: The stem yields a strong fibre which is especially durable in water

