

Indigenous

Common names: **English:** River bean, sesbania **Luganda:** Muzimbandeya, mubimba
Rukiga: Munyuganyege.

Ecology: One of many useful African *Sesbania* spp. which survive waterlogging and fix nitrogen. It is found at the margin of fresh-water lakes and seasonal ponds. Some types tolerate acid and saline soils. Easy to establish even in waterlogged soil and dry eroded soil. It is an important agroforestry shrub.

Uses: Firewood, poles, fodder (leaves), mulch, soil conservation and improvement, nitrogen fixation, shade (young coffee), fibres (young stems), soap (leaves).

Description: A deciduous, short-lived shrub or tree to 8 m. **BARK:** red-brown, young shoots hairy. **LEAVES:** compound to 12 cm long, 10-25 pairs leaflets, each leaflet to 2 **cm oblong, tip notched, narrow.** **FLOWERS:** pale **yellow, speckled maroon,** in few-flowered **sprays to 15 cm long.** **FRUIT:** abundant bunches of thin **pale brown pods to 20 cm,** with separated sections so **seeds rattle within.**

Propagation: Wildings, direct sowing at site.

Seed: The species is a prolific seeder with a high germination rate. No. of seeds per kg: about 110,000.

treatment: not necessary.

storage: seed can be stored for long periods if kept in a cool and dry place.

Management: Very fast growing. Pruning, short rotation; coppice when young.

Remarks: The species may harbour root-knot nematodes. The genetic diversity of *Sesbania* types allows for selection (e.g. for different uses, management, soil types). The leaf mulch and nitrogen-fixation features make this a tree of great potential for intercropping on small farms.



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