

Indigenous

Common names: **English:** Devil's yam **Luganda:** Lubira, lukolokolo.

Ecology: A small family separated from the Liliaceae by having tendrils and thorns; only one genus in Africa. Smilax is widely distributed throughout Africa in wet evergreen forest and shady places at forest edges and in secondary scrub, wooded grassland and woodland.

Uses: Fibre (strings for baskets, fish traps, furniture).

Description: A shrub or **distinctive woody climber** to 5 m or more, the brown stems and lower leaf stalks covered with **sharp recurved thorns** to 3 mm, highly effective in scrambling over other plants. **LEAVES:** alternate, **broad oval to round, 7-15 cm**, dark green with **unusual veins, 3-9 curving from base to tip**, which is quite sharp, leaf stalk about 1 cm; 2 tendrils grow at the base of the stalk, about 12 cm long. **FLOWERS:** tiny, **green-yellow-white**, grow in **small ball-like umbels, beside leaves, about 2 cm across**. **FRUIT:** **berries, 5-10 mm, red then purple** when ripe, containing the seeds.

Propagation: Regenerates naturally from seed. Use of wildings and seedlings also possible.

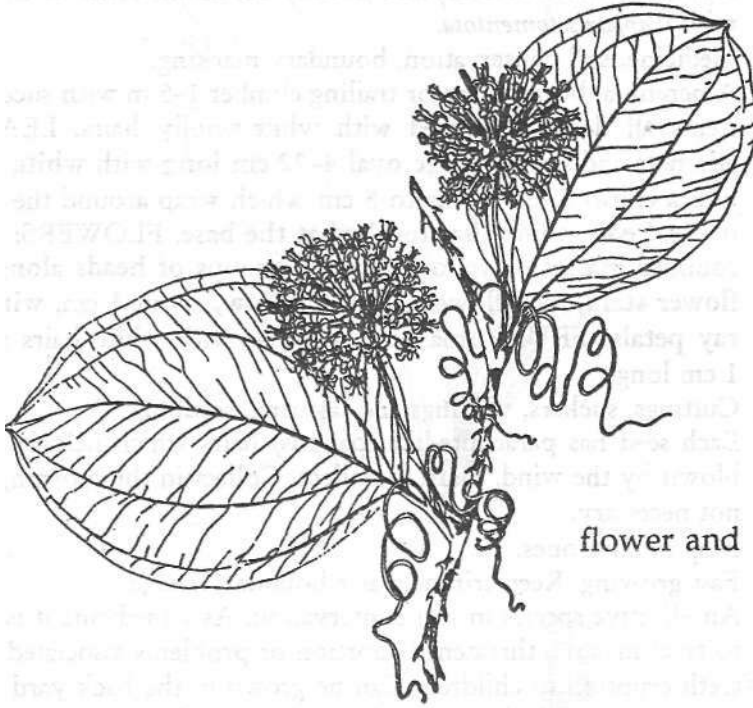
Seed: The small fruits can be collected from mother plants and gradually dried,

treatment: soaking in cold water overnight will speed up germination.

storage:

Management: The plants need support in the early stages for maximum length of the stem. Fast growing.

Remarks: The plants are very spiny and moving around where they are plentiful is difficult. It is recorded as reaching the upper tree canopy and is regarded as an obnoxious weed in some areas. The roots are also fibrous.



flower and

fruit head

