

***Spathodea campanulata* (S. nilotica)**

Bignoniaceae

Indigenous

COMMON NAMES: **English:** Nandi flame, African tulip tree; **Kipsigis:** Sebetaiyet; **Luhya:** Mutsulia; **Luhya (Bukusu):** Kumuchirisia, Kumusesi, Kumuchuri; **Luo:** Nyawend agwata, Madungudungu; **Nandi:** Sebetaiyet; **Pokot:** Repko; **Teso:** Ekakale.

DESCRIPTION: A deciduous tree, bare many months, crown rounded, usually 10–15 m. **BARK:** Pale, grey-brown and smooth, rough with age. **LEAVES:** Compound to 40 cm long, 6 pairs of leaflets, plus a central leaflet, each wavy, tip pointed. **Yellow-brown hairs** on shoots, buds, branchlets and underside of leaves. **FLOWERS:** **Bright orange-red clusters** stand out all over the tree, a yellow edge on the frilly petals. A yellow-flowering variety exists. Furry buds contain watery liquid. **FRUIT:** Large woody capsules to 25 cm, split on the ground releasing many flat winged seeds.

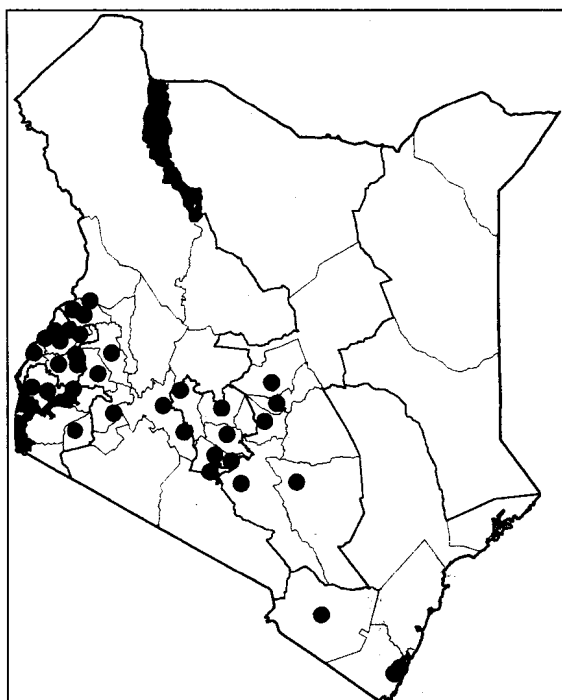
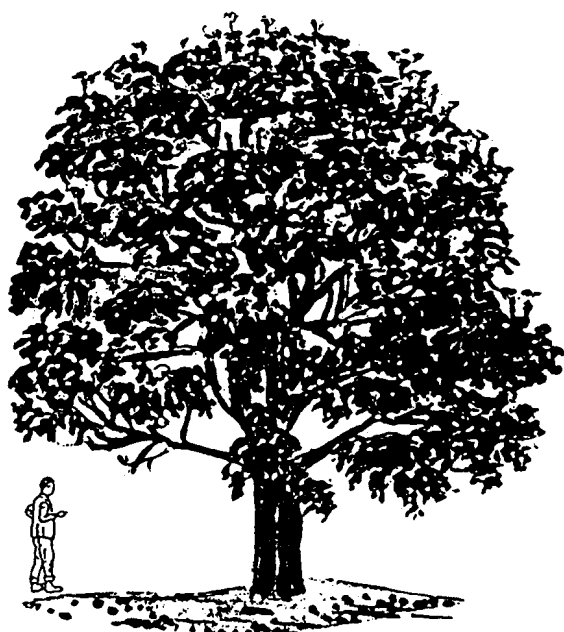
ECOLOGY: A decorative tree widely planted throughout the tropics. It grows naturally in tropical Africa from Ethiopia south to Zambia and Angola and west to Ghana. In Kenya from 2,000 m to the coast, in high-rainfall areas; 1,300–2,000 mm annual rainfall. It does best in red soil, but can also grow in black-cotton soil. Drought resistant once established and tolerates both well-drained and poorly drained soils. Widely planted as an ornamental and avenue tree. Agroclimatic Zones II–III. Flowers in August and in May in Nairobi; flowers in February–March and in September–November and seeds in June–July and December–February in Bungoma.

USES: Firewood, charcoal, carving, medicine (bark, flowers, roots), bee forage, shade, ornamental, avenue tree, mulch, windbreak.

PROPAGATION: Seedlings, wildings.

SEED: Good germination rate. About 125,000–150,000 seeds per kg. Collect the pods after they turn brown and leave them to air dry until they split open.

treatment: Not necessary.



Spathodea campanulata (cont)

storage: Seed does not store well. Use fresh seed for best results.

MANAGEMENT: Fairly fast growing; pruning, pollarding.
Coppicing on good sites, but only when young.

REMARKS: Not browsed by domestic animals. According to Luo beliefs, the species should not be planted near the homestead as it may attract lightning.

FURTHER READING: <http://www.worldagroforestrycentre.org/Sites/TreeDBS/AFT/AFT.htm>; Backes and Ahenda, 1998; Beentje, 1994; Bekele-Tesemma et al., 1993; Blundell, 1987; Dharani, 2002; Katende et al., 1995; Kokwaro, 1993; Lötschert and Beese, 1983; Mbuya et al., 1994; Noad and Birnie, 1989; Sommerlatte and Sommerlatte, 1990; Storrs, 1979.

