

Sterculia quinqueloba

Sterculiaceae

Indigenous

English: Large-leaved star chestnut
Kunda: Mulele
Nyanja: Mgoza, mlelezombo, msambamfumu
Senga: Kaiwami
Tumbuka: Kaiwami

Ecology: A conspicuous, deciduous tree of central and southern Africa and north to Tanzania. It grows at medium to low altitudes in most types of woodland, occasionally on termite mounds and on rocky hillsides in most parts of Zambia excluding Western Province.

Uses: **Timber** (heavy construction, furniture), medicine (barks, leaves), **ornamental**, gum, **rope** (bark), mats (bark).

Description: A small-to-medium sized deciduous tree, usually 5–12 m, occasionally to 18 m, with thick trunk and branches. **BARK:** very distinctive, **smooth pale and shiny, yellow-cream-pink-brown with some flaking; when cut a pale brown gum exudes.** **LEAVES:** **very large, to 40 cm across, with 3–5 lobes, stalks over 20 cm**, crowded at ends of branches, yellow-green, woolly hairs below; showy yellow-orange before they fall in May–July. **FLOWERS:** very small, yellow, in big heads to 30 cm appear with the leaves in February–June or occasionally in September. **FRUIT:** in **5 sections, each section to 6 cm, with golden hairs** and pointed, breaking open **like a star; 2–3 grey-black seeds seen around the rim**, with irritating hairs between, June–October.

Propagation: Seedlings, cuttings, truncheons.

Seed: No. of seeds per kg: 24,000–28,000. Germination up to 65% after 20 days.

treatment: Not necessary.

storage: Remain viable for 2 months at room temperature.

Management: Pruning, coppicing.

Remarks: The timber makes fine furniture. The wood has also been used in the mines. Although the gum is good quality, its flow is seasonal. The tree has been planted in parks and along avenues.

