

Strychnos cocculoides

Loganiaceae

Indigenous

- Common names: Eng: corky bark, monkey orange; Hehe: mnywewa; **Mate:** mdonga, mtongawali; Nyam: mtonga, mumilwa; **Swah:** mtonga.
- Ecology: A spiny shrub found throughout the drier parts of central and southern Africa. It grows naturally in *Brachystegia* and deciduous woodlands, especially on rocky hills. In Tanzania it is found in Tabora, Dodoma, Iringa, Mbeya and Lindi, 0-2,000 m.
- Uses: Firewood, building poles, tool handles, food (fruit), medicine (bark, leaves, roots, fruit).
- Description: A semi-deciduous shrub or small tree 3-8 m high, branches spreading to a rounded crown. **BARK:** thick, ridged and corky, brown in colour. Branchlets hairy, purple with strong paired spines, curved, **1 cm or more**. **LEAVES:** oval to circular, to 5 cm long, shiny above, dull below, 5 veins from the base. **FLOWERS:** small green-white in dense heads, about 3 cm in diameter. **FRUIT:** round, hard, woody, about 7 cm in diameter, dark green speckled with white when young, becoming yellow when ripe, containing a juicy pulp and many seeds. Fruit may take a year to mature.
- Propagation: Seedlings, root suckers.
- Seed info.: No. of seeds per kg: about 1,800. Germination is poor.
- treatment: Soaking in cold water for 12 hours may hasten germination.
- storage: seeds are short live—at most 2 months at room temperature.
- Management: Slow growing; coppicing.
- Remarks: The fruits are eaten by children and adults and therefore the trees are left when land is cleared for agriculture. The wood is white and tough, rather soft and pliable.

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