

Strychnos cocculoides

Loganiaceae

Indigenous

English: Corky-bark monkey orange**Nyanja:** Mzai, mzimbili, temya**Senga:** Kabeza**Ecology:** A spiny shrub found throughout the drier parts of tropical Africa north to Tanzania. It is a popular fruit tree distinguished by its corky bark, 0–2,000 m. Occurring throughout Zambia; it is found in moist woodland types scattered in sandy soils on rocky slopes.**Uses:** **Timber** (utensils, tool handles), **food** (fruit), medicine (fruit, bark, leaves, roots).**Description:** An evergreen shrub or tree 2–8 m, the branches spreading to a rounded crown. **BARK:** cream-brown, thick, corky, **deeply cracked in ridges**. Branchlets thick, purple and hairy, the **strong paired spines, curved, 1 cm or more**. **LEAVES:** oval to circular, up to 5 cm long, somewhat rounded at the base, dull below, 5 veins from the base. **FLOWERS:** white-cream-green in dense heads about 3 cm across, September–November. **FRUIT:** **woody balls about 7 cm across**, spotted green and yellow, **darker yellow when mature**, many seeds within. The fruit takes up to a year to ripen.**Propagation:** Seedlings, rootsuckers.**Seed:** Seed have a hard coat. No. of seeds per kg: $\pm 1,800$. Poor germination.**treatment:** Soak in cold water.**storage:** Can be stored for about 2 months at room temperature.**Management:** Coppicing. Protect saplings from fire.**Remarks:** This tree is valued for its fruit and is usually left when fields are cleared. Fruits are eaten by both children and adults and many prefer them to those of *Strychnos spinosa*. The wood is white and tough, rather soft and pliable. The fruit mixed with honey is used to treat cough. The root cures gonorrhoea and when chewed alleviates eczema.