

Strychnos innocua

Loganiaceae

Indigenous

Nyanja: Mteme, mtulutulu, kamwelalumba, kabulukulu, kambeli

Ecology: A tree growing in lowlands from Kenya to Malawi and South Africa. In the northern region of Zambia it is found in plateau areas and on rocky slopes, e.g. on the Muchinga escarpment.

Uses: **Firewood**, timber (utensils), poles, **food** (fruit).

Description: A shrub or small tree, usually 3–6 m, **without spines**, branches often twisted, branchlets hanging down. **BARK:** pale grey, smooth, branchlets powdery grey-green to yellow-brown. **LEAVES:** in opposite pairs, widely spaced, tough, **dull blue-green** with 3–5 main veins and clear net veining, **both sides similar**, wider at rounded tip, 4–10 cm. **FLOWERS:** small, green-cream, 2–4 in stalked clusters beside leaves, calyx shorter than petals. **FRUIT:** **round with a thick woody shell**, 5–7 cm across, blue-green, turning **yellow-orange**, containing many seeds in pulp.

Propagation: Seedlings, rootsuckers.

Seed: No. of seeds per kg: $\pm 1,800$. Germination is poor.

treatment: Soaking in cold water for 12 hours may improve germination.

storage: Can retain viability for only a short period (2 months).

Management: Pruning, coppicing.

Remarks: The tree is often left in farmland because of its edible fruit. Even the fresh wood burns, so it is useful as firewood. A useful homestead tree for fruits and firewood.

