

Strychnos spinosa

Loganiaceae

Indigenous

- Common names: Eng: elephant orange, spiny monkey ball; Fipa: mtonga; Fiome: amafughun; Hehe: mtangadas; Mate: mdonga, mungulungu; Nyam: mwage; Pare: mshegheshe; Sangu: mtangadas; Swah: mpapa, mtonga; Zara: mtonga; Zigua: mkwakwa.
- Ecology: A semi-evergreen shrub found all over tropical Africa. It grows in a wide variety of dry woodland and savannah, frequently on sandy soils of river banks up to 1,500 m.
- Uses: Firewood, charcoal, timber (furniture, boxes), food (fruit), fodder, medicine (fruit, leaves, bark, roots).
- Description: A thorny shrub or small tree usually 4–5 m but up to 9 m tall, with a spreading rounded crown. The spines are short, paired and curved or straight. BARK: grey, rough. LEAVES: like all *Strychnos*, three veins from the base, leathery, glossy green above, wedge-shaped to the base, to 10 cm long. FLOWERS: small, cream-green, in dense bunches at the end of branches. FRUIT: rounded and large to 12 cm across, green at first then light brown and woody, containing many flat seeds within juicy rather acid pulp.
- Propagation: Seedlings, root suckers.
- Seed info.: No. of seeds per kg: about 1,800. Seed has a hard coat.
- treatment: soak in cold water for 12 hours.
- storage: seed can be stored.
- Management: Root suckers can be encouraged by exposing roots. Coppicing.
- Remarks: Although the ripe fruit pulp is edible, seeds are toxic. Wood is pale, straight grained and planes well. However, like most *Strychnos* it is not easy to cultivate.

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