

*Strychnos spinosa*

## Loganiaceae

Indigenous

**English:** Elephant orange, spiny monkey orange**Kunda:** Mzimbili**Nyanja:** Temya, mzai, mzimbili**Senga:** Msongolo, masongolo**Ecology:** A spiny shrub or tree found all over tropical Africa in a wide variety of dry open woodlands, 0–1,500 m; frequent on sandy soils of river banks. It grows throughout Zambia and is normally left in gardens for the fruit.**Uses:** Firewood, charcoal, timber (boxes), **food** (fruit), **medicine** (fruits, leaves, bark, roots), fodder (leaves), musical instruments (dry fruit shell).**Description:** A semi-evergreen thorny tree often multistemmed, usually 2–5 m, up to 9 m, the crown rounded. **BARK:** grey-brown, rough with **short black-tipped hooked thorns, in pairs** along the branches. **LEAVES:** **opposite, oval to round, to 10 cm**, shiny green and leathery, edge wavy, 3–5 veins from the base. **FLOWERS:** Small cream-green-white, in bunches at branch ends, September–November. **FRUIT:** **rounded and woody**, yellow-brown when ripe, to 12 cm across; conspicuous and hang many months on the tree; 10–100 pale seeds are surrounded by **juicy, rather acid flesh**.**Propagation:** Seedlings, rootsuckers.**Seed:** Seed has a hard coat. No. of seeds per kg:  $\pm 1,800$ .**treatment:** Soak seed in cold water.**storage:** Can be stored.**Management:** Root suckers can be encouraged by exposing roots. Coppicing.**Remarks:** Although the fruit is edible, seeds are toxic. Wood is pale, straight-grained and planes well. Like most *Strychnos*, it is not easy to cultivate. The hard fruit can be cracked open by throwing it on the ground. Unripe fruit may be poisonous.