

# Syzygium owariense

*Myrtaceae*

Indigenous

Common names: Bende: kajibajiba, kasiamongo; Eng: water berry; Fipa: yunga; Mate: mhungu; Nyam: kasyamongo, mtumbu; Swah: mzambarau ziwa; Zinza: mgege.

Ecology: A tree of swamp forests, stream banks, riverine thicket and woodland, and along small streams in higher-altitude areas, 1,200-2,000 m, in Malawi, Zambia and Uganda and into West Africa; also found in Mozambique. In Tanzania it is found in the Ufipa highlands, Iringa, Mbeya and Mufindi.

Uses: Firewood, food (fruit), bee forage.

Description: An evergreen multi-stemmed shrub or small tree up to 8 m, erect branches to a bushy rounded crown. BARK: grey, thick, smooth at first becoming dark grey, rough and flaking with age. LEAVES: opposite, blue-green, thick, leathery, smooth and shiny, about 10 cm long, leaf tip long pointed but blunt, pink-yellow midrib, clear below, leaf stalk pink-red, aromatic when crushed. FLOWERS: creamy white or pink with numerous stamens, sweet scented, in heads to 15 cm across, on angular square stalks. FRUIT: oblong and fleshy, about 1.5 cm long and 1 cm thick, green at first, purple, then black when ripe, containing 1 seed.

Propagation: Seedlings, suckers, direct sowing.

Seed info.: No. of seeds per kg: about 400. Germination is very good, up to 90% after 30 days.

treatment: not necessary.

storage: can retain viability for only a day.

Management: Coppicing, pollarding.

Remarks: Can be planted along river banks. It is said to be the best *Syzygium* species for honey. The leaves and fruit contain the essential oil eugenol which has been used for flavouring food (Guinea "cloves"). In swamp forest the roots produce knee-shaped air roots.

