

# Tetrapleura tetraptera

# Mimosaceae

Indigenous

**Common names:** **Kwamba:** Kikangabalimi **Luo L:** Itek **Luganda:** Munyegenye **Lugwe:** Namakumbi **Runyoro:** Mucholi.

**Ecology:** An understory tree from West Africa to Sudan, Tanzania and Zaire found in lowland rain fores. In Uganda, it is widespread but nowhere abundant in tropical mixed rain forests and secondary forests and sometimes in savannah and gallery forests, e.g. in Bwamba and Zoka forests.

**Uses:** Firewood, charcoal, timber (carpentry), food (fleshy wing of the fruit), medicine (bark), shade (for coffee and tea).

**Description:** A deciduous tree 15-30 m with a straight trunk to a rounded crown or with layered spreading branches. Large trees have small sharp buttresses. **BARK:** thin grey-brown, smooth to rough, shallow vertical fissures. **LEAVES:** **bipinnate on a stalk 8-23 cm with 5-7 pairs of pinnae.** Each stalk has 6-12 **alternate leaflets** each side, **leaflets oblong 1-2 cm long, tip notched, softly hairy below.** **FLOWERS:** on **spikes beside leaves, 4-14 cm, one or two together, flowers small, yellow-pink-brown** with 5 free equal petals. **FRUIT:** a **woody pod with 4 wings** (tetraptera), smelling of caramel, especially on rotting below the tree, 12-23 cm long, straight or slightly curved, **shiny purple-brown to black.** The wings on each side have soft sugary edible pulp inside. Seeds in separate sections, rattling in the mature pod, are set free when it rots. Seeds hard, dark brown, less than 1 cm.

**Propagation:** Seedlings, wildings.

**Seed:** Embedded in sweet-smelling pulp from which they have to be separated manually.

**treatment:** soak in cold water for 24 hours.

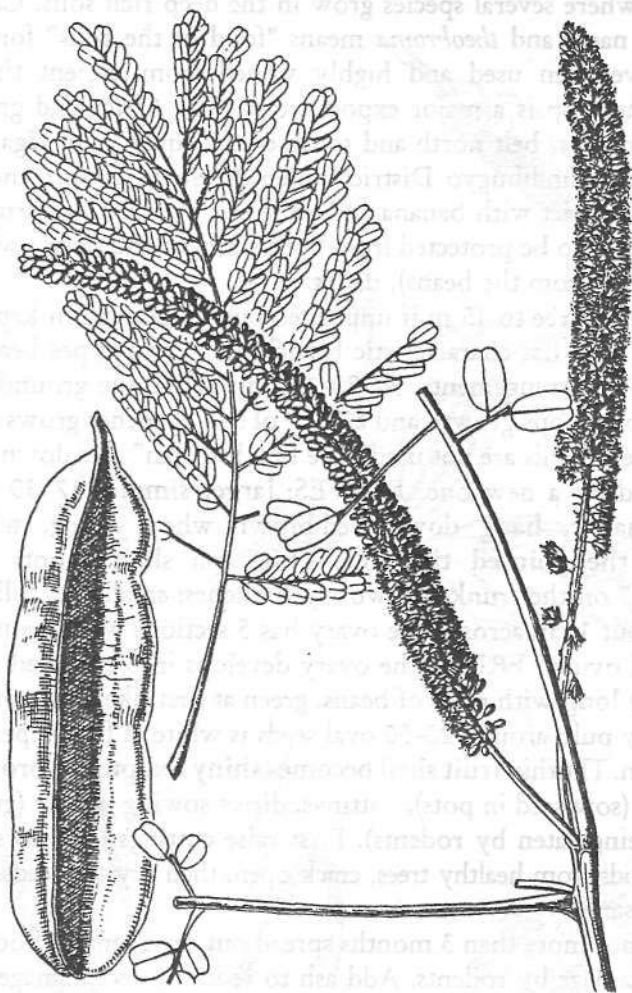
**storage:** susceptible to insect attack. Add ash to reduce insect damage. Store in sealed containers in a cool place.

**Management:** Coppicing, pollarding.

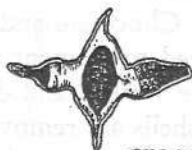
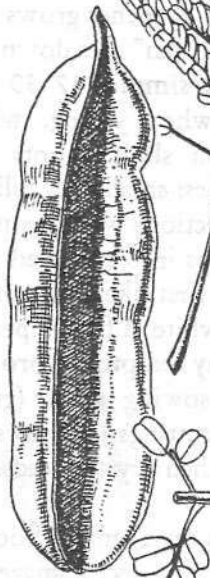
**Remarks:** Recommended for planting as a shade tree in coffee and tea plantations. The stem bark is used to treat cough. The sapwood is white; heartwood pale red, darkening to dark yellow, red or brown, fine in texture, medium hard, easy to work and of medium durability.

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enlarged flower



cross section of pod

enlarged seed

