

Thevetia peruviana (*T. neriifolia*)

Apocynaceae

Central and South America

English: Yellow oleander

Nyanja: Savesha

Ecology: A small tree with attractive foliage and flowers, widely planted throughout the tropics, 0–2,000 m. Commonly used as a hedge. It has been planted all over Zambia, largely in townships, but is a useful hedge even in dry areas and tolerates both clay and sandy soils.

Uses: Shade, **ornamental**, **live fence**.

Description: An evergreen multistemmed shrub or tree usually about 4 m, shady when full sized. **LEAVES:** shiny, **narrow, in spirals** around the branchlets, to 15 cm long. **FLOWERS:** **bright yellow** or pale orange trumpets to 6 cm long; **twisted in bud**, the green base reaching the edge of the petals. **FRUIT:** fleshy, 4-angled to rounded, 3 cm across on a long stalk; 1–2 large brown-black triangular seeds inside.

Propagation: Seedlings, cuttings.

Seed: Germination rate of 80%. No. of seeds per kg: ±300.

treatment: Not necessary.

storage: Seed can be stored for about 3 months.

Management: Prune about a month before the rains to induce flowering.

Remarks: All parts of this tree are poisonous if eaten, so take care with children. Livestock can also be poisoned by this plant. The plant is cultivated in Hawaii for a powerful heart drug which can be extracted from the seeds.

