

Uapaca kirkiana

Euphorbiaceae

Indigenous

Common names: Bende: mkusu; Eng: wild loquat; Hehe: mguhu, mkusu; Ngoni: msuku; Nyam: mkusu.

Ecology: A well-known fruit tree found in Burundi, Zaire, Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa. It often occurs in extensive pure stands in deciduous woodlands, upland wooded grasslands and along streams, often on stony soils and rocky slopes, 720-1,950 m. In Tanzania found in Geita, Iringa, Njombe, Ruvuma and Mbeya.

Uses: Firewood, charcoal, timber (general purpose), poles food/drink (fruit), medicine (roots, leaves, bark), bee forage, shade.

Description: A much-branched semi-deciduous tree up to 9 m with a rounded crown. BARK: dark grey or grey-brown with vertical fissures. LEAVES: simple, alternate or in whorls, confined at ends of branchlets. Shiny dark green, thick and coarse, usually about 17 cm long, orange-yellow, woolly hairs below, and on veins, tip notched. FLOWERS: male and female flowers produced on different trees. All flowers are greenish-yellow, inconspicuous, growing from old wood. FRUIT: rounded, rusty green berry, to 3 cm diameter, turning rusty yellow when ripe, sweet pulpy flesh surrounds 3-4 seeds.

Propagation: Seedlings, cuttings, wildings, root suckers.

Seed info.: No. of seeds per kg: about 2,500. Germination from fresh seed good—about 70% after 30 days.

treatment: not necessary.

storage: Very short viability. Avoid storage.

Management: A fairly fast-growing tree; coppicing.

Remarks: A potential fruit-tree species for domestication. An indicator of poor soils and also a potential tree for establishment in poor soils unsuitable for agricultural crops. In Zambia "msuku" wine is made commercially from the **fruit**. Flowers are valuable for honey production. The straight-grained timber will take a polish and is a useful wood for furniture.

