

Vangueriopsis lanciflora

Rubiaceae

Indigenous

Common names: Eng: crooked false medlar; Hehe: msambalawe-lulenga; Nyam: mgelelya.

Ecology: A shrub of central and east Africa and into Mozambique, common at medium to higher altitudes in woodland and wooded grassland, often associated with rocky outcrops. In Tanzania it is found near Tabora, Manyoni, Chunya and Iringa, 250-1,250 m.

Uses: Firewood, charcoal, utensils (spoons), food (fruit), bee forage, medicine (bark, roots), live fence.

Description: A shrub or small tree 7 m or more in height with spreading more-or-less horizontal branches. BARK: smooth, grey on trunk and older branches; **powdery red-brown on** young branches, flaking to show brown-pink underbark. LEAVES: variable, about 3-13 cm long, oval and opposite, blue-green, roughly hairy above or smooth but **grey-white hairs below** tip rounded or not, edge wavy on a stalk about 1 cm. FLOWERS: appear before the leaves, **tubular** green-yellow **buds**, hairy, about 2 cm long, open to reveal white **petals which curl back, sweet scented** and showy. Flowers borne in leaf axils. FRUIT: **rounded** when it has 2 seeds but **one sided** when only 1 seed develops, **up to 3 cm long, green and hairy, becoming yellow-brown**; fleshy slightly acid pulp around seeds.

Propagation: Seedlings, root suckers.

Seed info.: Germination is poor owing to hard seed coat; at best 60% after 40 days.

treatment: soak seed in cold water for 24 hours,

storage: mature green fruits can be picked and stored for ripening. Can be stored for up to 12 months.

Management: Seedlings give best results. Although regeneration from coppicing and root suckers is good, the growth often succumbs to drought and fire.

Remarks: The species is light demanding and should be planted after partial clearance of vegetation. The leaves and fruit are attacked by insects.

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