

**Ximenia americana****Olacaceae**

Indigenous

**English:** Wild plum, sour plum  
**Kunda:** Nthengele, kamlawe  
**Nyanja:** Nthengele, mtundulukwa  
**Senga:** Wabona

**Ecology:** Widespread throughout the tropics, 0–2,000 m. Found throughout Zambia in all vegetation types, frequent in plateau miombo and mopane woodland. Grows on sandy soils and stony slopes.

**Uses:** **Firewood**, charcoal, **timber** (utensils), **food** (fruit), drink (fruit), medicine (roots, bark, leaves), tannin (roots, bark).

**Description:** A semi-deciduous shrub or small bushy **spiny tree**, **3–5 m**, but may reach 8 m high. **BARK:** grey-black with small scales. **LEAVES:** alternate, simple or tufts, **blue-grey-green**, to **7 cm**, fold upwards along midrib; tip round or notched, smell of bitter almonds when crushed; **spines 1 cm**, **thin, straight**. **FLOWERS:** fragrant, white-green or pink in small branched clusters, July–October. **FRUIT:** **round to 2.5 cm**, **thin skin**, yellow-pink-red, pulp sour but refreshing, **1 large seed**, containing oil.

**Propagation:** Seedlings.

**Seed:** No. of seeds per kg: 660–1,400.

**treatment:** Not necessary.

**storage:** Seed cannot be stored longer than 3 months. Sow fresh seed for good germination.

**Management:** Coppicing.

**Remarks:** The wood is fine-grained, heavy, hard and very durable. The seed contains a non-drying oil which is suitable for soap manufacture and lubrication. It has also been used as a body and hair oil and for softening leather. The tree is drought-hardy. Leaves and twigs are used to treat fever, colds and eye infections and can also be used as a laxative. Roots are used to treat headaches, sexually transmitted diseases and skin disorders, and the bark to treat headaches, kidney and heart disorders. A decoction of roots and fruits is used to treat dysentery in calves.

