

Ziziphus mauritiana

Rhamnaceae

Middle East and India, naturalized

English: Indian jujube

Kunda: Masau

Nyanja: Masau, msau

Senga: Masau

Ecology: A small drought-resistant tree now widespread in Africa and from the Mediterranean to India, 0–1,500 m. The tree is cultivated for its fruits in some countries where thornless varieties have been developed. It is widespread in the Valley areas of the Eastern Province of Zambia and has a strongly developed root system, preferring a high water-table.

Uses: Firewood, charcoal, timber (utensils), **food** (fruit), **fodder** (leaves, fruits), bee forage, **live fence**, tannin (bark), dye (bark).

Description: A thorny semi-evergreen shrub or tree 3–6 m; branches drooping down form a rounded crown. **BARK:** grey-black; pairs of dark brown thorns, both straight and recurved (“thumb-pointer”). **LEAVES:** markedly alternate along the stems, oval, variable in length to 8 cm; leaf bases **rounded and equal**, yellow-green above, **hairy below**. **FLOWERS:** small, yellow-green. **FRUIT:** **rounded, 1–2 cm**, yellow to red-brown, 2 seeds in a large stone, surrounded by thin edible pulp.

Propagation: Seedlings, direct seeding, root suckers, cuttings.

Seed: Germination rates are low. No. of seeds per kg: 650–3,500.

treatment: Soak in hot water and allow to cool for 24–48 hours; first crack or otherwise remove the hard seed cover.

storage: Can store up to a year.

Management: Lopping, pollarding, pruning, coppicing.

Remarks: The fruit is usually sold in markets to eat raw or to make an alcoholic drink (*kachasu*). This tree has very similar uses to *Ziziphus abyssinica*.

