Albizia coriaria

LOCAL NAMES
Luganda (musisiya, mugavu); Swahili (mugavu)

BOTANIC DESCRIPTION
Albizia coriaria is a deciduous tree 6-36 m tall. Tree crown spreading and flat, trunk often twisted. Buttresses short and blunt. Bark gray-black, rough and raggedly scaling. Young branchlets hairy.

Leaves bipinnate, pinnae 3-6 pairs, leaflets 6-11 pairs, oblong to elliptic 13-33 mm long, 5-17 mm wide, rounded at apex, subglabrous except for a few hairs on the midrib beneath.

Flowers subsessile or on pedicels 0.5-2 mm long; bracteoles minute, 1.5-2 mm long usually falling off before flowering. Calyx 3.5-6.5 mm long, not slit unilaterally, puberulous outside, with few shortly stipitate glands. Corolla 8-13.5 cm long, white and puberulous outside.

Fruit a pod 10-21 cm long, 2-5 cm wide, glabrous or nearly so, brown or purplish-brown in colour with a tapered or acute apex.

A. coriaria is closely related to A. ferruginea and distinguishing between the two species is difficult. The genus was named after Filippo del Albizzi, a Florentine nobleman who in 1749 introduced A. julibrissin into cultivation. The specific epithet 'coriaria' describes the leathery texture of its upper leaf surfaces.

BIOLOGY
A. coriaria is a hermaphroditic species.
**Albizia coriaria**

**Welw. ex Oliver**

**Fabaceae - Mimosoideae**

**ECOLOGY**

*A. coriaria* is a pioneer species common in wooded grassland, woodland and thicket. Its absence in closed canopy rainforest is largely the result of its high light requirements. Its distribution range extends from West Africa through eastern, southern and parts of central Africa.

**BIOPHYSICAL LIMITS**

Altitude: 850-1 700 m

Soil type: Found on a variety of soils.

**DOCUMENTED SPECIES DISTRIBUTION**

Native: Angola, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda

Exotic:

The map above shows countries where the species has been planted. It does neither suggest that the species can be planted in every ecological zone within that country, nor that the species can not be planted in other countries than those depicted. Since some tree species are invasive, you need to follow biosafety procedures that apply to your planting site.
PRODUCTS
Fodder: Foliage eaten by livestock.

Apiculture: The tree is a useful source of bee fodder.

Fuel: The tree is used as firewood and for charcoal making.

Timber: The sapwood is soft but the heartwood hard and durable. Timber used for boat building, utensils and furniture manufacture.

Poison: Molluscicidal activity is shown by bark extracts of A. coriaria. Chemical analysis of the extracts indicates the active ingredients are tannins. However, use of A. coriaria is not recommended on large scale because of its low potency compared to Endod (Phytolacca dodecandra).

Medicine: Bark is used for the treatment of menorrhagia, threatened abortion and post-partum haemorrhage. The roots and bark in concoctions with Carissa edulis and Euclea divinorum are used in treating venereal diseases or used in steam fumigation treatments for sore eyes. The bark decoction is used in treating cattle diseases and a number of abdominal problems associated with protozoan parasites.

Other products: The bark is rich in saponins.

SERVICES
Shade or shelter: A good shade provider.

Nitrogen fixing: A. coriaria is nitrogen fixing.

Ornamental: A. coriaria is a beautiful tree with bright green splashes of new foliage growth and showy flowers, commonly found in homesteads and protected in fields.

Intercropping: A. coriaria is one of the species used in a permanent cultivation indigenous agroforestry system on the central plains of Uganda.

Other services: Leaves used to hasten banana ripening. This tree is highly regarded culturally among the Luo of Kenya.
TREEMANAGEMENT
A. coriaria is a slow growing tree, recommended management practices are lopping and pollarding.

GERmplasm MANAGEMENT
Good germination rates (30-70%) are reported for A. coriaria. No pre-treatment is necessary for fresh seed, however stored seed needs soaking. Seeds can be stored up to one year. There are about 6 000 seeds/kg. Insecticide application is necessary to ward off insects.

PESTs AND DISEASES
Seeds are prone to beetle attack, often while still on the parent tree. Wood is prone to termite attack.
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FURTHER READING

Katende AB et al. 1995. Useful trees and shrubs for Uganda. Identification, Propagation and Management for Agricultural and Pastoral Communities. Regional Soil Conservation Unit (RSCU), Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA).


SUGGESTED CITATION