

**LOCAL NAMES**

English (brown mahogany); Luganda (nabugala)

**BOTANIC DESCRIPTION**

*Lovoa swynnertonii* is an evergreen tree up to 50 m in height. Bole fluted or slightly buttressed at the base to a height of 2 m, long and straight, sometimes 30 m to first branch, slender, up to 2 m in diameter. Bark brown-grey to black, fairly smooth, flaking in round pieces 2-30 cm across.

Leaves up to 30 cm long, pubescent when young; leaflets usually 10-16, oblong-elliptic or lanceolate-elliptic, slightly falcate, up to 10 x 4 cm, apex shortly acuminate, base cuneate; lateral nerves in 16 closely spaced pairs; petiole flattened.

Inflorescence an axillary panicle up to 10 cm long; calyx 0.1 cm long, puberulous especially on the margins. Petals 0.25-0.3 cm long.

Capsule up to 5.5 x 2 cm; valves brownish black, with scattered, minute, white lenticels, separating first from the apex and remaining attached for some time before falling.

Seeds, including wing, up to 4.5 x 1 cm.

The generic name *Lovoa* is after River Lovoi in Congo.

**BIOLOGY**

The winged seeds are wind dispersed.

**ECOLOGY**

*L. swynnertonii* is commonly found in lowland and mid-altitude mixed rain forest between 180-1 525 m.

**BIOPHYSICAL LIMITS**

Altitude: 180-200 m, Mean annual rainfall: 1200-2450 mm

**DOCUMENTED SPECIES DISTRIBUTION**

Native: Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda, Zimbabwe

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**

Fuel: The tree provides fuelwood.

Timber: The tree produces a beautiful dark brownish red timber, is cross-grained and difficult to work. The timber is generally marketed with *L. trichiloides*. In Zimbabwe it was formerly used for outdoor work.

**SERVICES**

Erosion control: This species is important in water catchment area protection.

Shade or shelter: The brown mahogany provides cool shading.

Intercropping: Because of the height of the tree, it is very suitable for intercropping as shade is cast over a large area and will not suppress the near crops or trees. It is therefore planted in pure stands or intercropped in banana, coffee and cacao plantations.

**TREE MANAGEMENT**

The tree matures after 30 years.

**GERMPLASM MANAGEMENT**

The wind dispersed seeds are collected under mother trees. There are about 4 400 seeds/kg. Seeds require no pretreatment. Seeds should be stored in sealed containers in a cool place, addition of ash is recommended to reduce insect damage.

**PESTS AND DISEASES**

Seeds are easily attacked by insects.

**FURTHER READING**

Beentje HJ. 1994. Kenya trees, shrubs and lianas. National Museums of Kenya.

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).

Styles BT and White F. 1991. Meliaceae. In: Flora of Tropical East Africa. AA Balkema, Rotterdam.

**SUGGESTED CITATION**

Orwa C, A Mutua, Kindt R, Jamnadass R, S Anthony. 2009 Agroforestry Database: a tree reference and selection guide version 4.0 (<http://www.worldagroforestry.org/sites/treedbs/treedatabases.asp>)