

LOCAL NAMES

Swahili (msavia,msambia,mochochoch,mchanvya)

BOTANIC DESCRIPTION

Pachystela msolo is a medium or tall evergreen tree with many branches; it grows to 20-50 m high, with a dense crown and a deeply fluted and pillared bole to about 3 m.

Leaves alternate, medium to large, 8-35 x 3-14 cm (rarely larger), dark green, coriaceous, glabrous and shining on upper surfaces; underside slightly silvery, hairy or glaucous, with prominent venation; leaf shape obovate-oblong, 10-16 lateral nerves on each side of the leaf; leaf stalks short, 3-10 mm long.

Flowers small, greenish-white, fragrant, clustered below the leaves on young branchlets and older branches; pedicels short, usually 3-6 mm long.

Fruits are small, green, becoming a dull yellow with ripening; subglobose berries, about 3 x 2.5 cm, and beaked; pulp juicy; seeds ellipsoid, slightly flattened, up to 1.8 cm long; scar is prominent, lateral and occupying over half of surface.

BIOLOGY

It takes about 6 months from flowering to fruit maturity.

ECOLOGY

The species occurs naturally in lowland rainforests, extending into lower fringes of upland rainforest and riverine forests. It is abundant in lower altitudes, but its frequency in occurrence decreases with rise in altitude. *P. msolo* grows in areas with great variation in rainfall regime. In its natural range, low rainfall is supplemented by a permanent high groundwater table.

BIOPHYSICAL LIMITS

Altitude: 80-1800 m, Mean annual temperature: 16-31 deg. C, Mean annual rainfall: 640-1750 mm

Soil type: Laterized red earths; yellow-red, gritty, sandy clay loams

DOCUMENTED SPECIES DISTRIBUTION

Native: Benin, Cameroon, Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, Togo, 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

Food: The fruit pulp of *P. msolo* is edible.

Timber: The tree is reputed to produce good-quality poles for construction.

TREE MANAGEMENT

P. msolo is a very slow-growing tree. Pollarding seems to increase the quantity of fruit it produces.

FURTHER READNG

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

Dale IR, Greenway PJ. 1961. Kenya trees and shrubs. Buchanan's Kenya Estates Ltd.

Eggeling. 1940. Indigenous trees of Uganda. Govt. of Uganda.

FAO. 1983. Food and fruit bearing forest species. 1: Examples from Eastern Africa. FAO Forestry Paper. 44/1. Rome.

Turril WB, Milne-Redhead E. 1952. Oleaceae. In: Flora of tropical East Africa. Crown Agents, London.

Vivien J, Faure JJ. 1996. Fruitiers sauvage d'Afrique. Publications du Ministere de la Cooperation.

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>)