

Indigenous

**Common names:** Runyankore: Musebeya.

**Ecology:** A tree which occurs from Kenya and southern Uganda to Natal in South Africa. Common in deciduous woodlands, bushlands, wooded grassland. The species is very rare in Uganda occurring on stony hillsides in Mbarara, Bushenyi and Ntungamo Districts.

**Uses:** Firewood, charcoal, timber (small boats), tool handles, utensils (mortars), beehives, medicine (roots, bark), nitrogen fixation, soap.

**Description:** A medium to large deciduous tree with **light spreading crown**, usually 5-15 m, branching low down. **Young branchlets and leaf stalks have rust-brown hairs.** BARK: rough **grey-brown-black, deep wide fissures.** LEAVES: bipinnate, only 2-4 pairs of pinnae with **3-6 pairs large stiff leaflets**, each one 2-6 x 1-4 cm, wider at the tip with a small sharp point, characteristically **hairy below.** FLOWERS: in large half-spherical heads, white or yellow-green, lasting only a few days, the **red stamens not, or only slightly, hanging out of the corolla tubes.** FRUIT: pods, red at first, later **shiny red-brown**, flat and straight up to 27 x 6.5 cm, containing 4-6 flat seeds about 1 cm across.

**Propagation** Seedlings, root suckers.

**Seed:** No. of seeds per kg: 6,000-8,000. Germination is good, completed after 30 days.

**treatment:** fresh seed requires no treatment. Stored seeds should be soaked in cold water for 6 hours before sowing.

**storage:** can be stored for long periods if kept dry and insect free.

**Management:** Growth rate is medium; lopping, pollarding.

**Remarks:** Seeds and pods are poisonous to livestock. The wood is light to moderately heavy but not very durable. It is easy to work for household utensils such as mortars, although the sawdust is irritating to the nose. Bark and roots contain saponins with medicinal uses. Roots boiled with water can be used instead of soap.

