

*Albizia versicolor*

## Mimosoideae

Indigenous

**Kunda:** Msasengoma  
**Nyanja:** Mlilanzeze, mtanga  
**Senga:** Msasempanga  
**Tumbuka:** Buwa

**Ecology:** Grows from Kenya and Uganda in the north to South Africa. Common in deciduous woodlands, bushland and wooded grassland throughout the miombo. Prefers well-drained soils and a high water-table, 150–1,700 m. It is found both on the plateau and in the valley.

**Uses:** **Timber** (small boats, tool handles, utensils, mortars), **beehives**, **medicine** (roots, bark), nitrogen fixation.

**Description:** A medium to large deciduous tree with a short trunk to a **light spreading crown**, usually 5–15 m. **Young branchlets and leaf stalks have rust-brown hairs**. **BARK:** rough grey-brown-black, deep wide fissures. **LEAVES:** compound, only 2–4 pairs of stalks with **3–6 pairs large stiff leaflets**, each 2–6 cm long, 1–4 cm across, wider at the tip, usually flattened with a small, sharp point; hairs above, **densely hairy below**, veins raised. **FLOWERS:** large half-spherical heads, red stamens on **green-yellow stalks**. **FRUIT:** large pods at the top of the tree, red at first, later **shiny red-brown**, flat and straight up to **27 x 6.5 cm**, with 4–6 flat seeds about 1 cm across.

**Propagation** Seedlings, rootsuckers.

**Seed:** No. of seeds per kg: 6,000–8,000. Germination is good, in 30 days.

**treatment:** None for fresh seed; soak stored seed in cold water for 6 hours.

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

**Management:** Fairly fast growing; lopping, pollarding.

**Remarks:** Seeds and pods are poisonous to livestock. The wood is light to moderately heavy but not durable. It is easy to work for household utensils such as mortars. An infusion of roots is used to treat headache, and a decoction of roots boiled for 3 minutes is used to treat syphilis, gonorrhoea, sore eyes, night blindness and skin rash.

