

Beilschmiedia ugandensis (Tylostemon ugandensis) *Lauraceae*

Indigenous

Common names: **Luganda:** Mwasa **Lugbara:** Befe **Runyankore:** Mukarata.

Ecology: This family also contains the camphor woods, avocado and cinnamon trees. *Beilschmiedia* is a rain forest tree abundant in forest around the shores of Lake Victoria and lower montane forests. Many *Beilschmiedia* spp. are found in the wet Central African forests. *B. ugandensis* is found in Mengo, Masaka, Ankole, Toro, West Nile and Madi Districts in the Budongo, Mpanga and Zoka Forests—confined to swampy areas and other damp places, rare in drier forest.

Uses: Firewood, charcoal, timber (dugout canoes), props for mines, food (fruit).

Description: A large forest tree usually 9-25 m but reaching 45 m. The bole is often crooked but to 50 cm diameter and reaching 1 m in large specimens. The crown has **dark heavy foliage**. **BARK: light brown, smooth, then flaking in large sheets**. When cut the surface is red-yellow with dotted pits. **LEAVES: long oval, 8-10 cm long**, the tip blunt or slightly pointed, veins irregular, narrowed to the base which may be rounded, on a **stalk about 1 cm long which is channelled above**. **FLOWERS:** male and female on separate trees. Flowers small, crowded on **sprays in leaf axils, 2-10 cm long, pink-brown**. **FRUIT:** purple brown, **soft and oval, 0.5-2.5 cm long** with red-purple juice.

Propagation: Seedlings (sow seed in pots), direct sowing on site, wildings.

Seed: Fruit on female trees fall to the ground when ripe. Collect in a heap and allow the outer coat to decompose. Then remove this outer fleshy part by hand and sun dry the seeds. Crack the hard seed case to hasten germination.

treatment:

storage:

the seed will keep for a year if left in the seed case in a cool well-aired place.

Management: Coppicing, pollarding. Slow growing.

Remarks: Seedlings of this species have been raised in Masaka by the VI Tree Planting Project. The seed is rich in oil but its value is yet to be explored. Can be planted as a stand or intercropped with banana, coffee or cocoa. The wood is durable enough for mine work. Canoes made from this timber are used on Lake Nabugabo near Masaka.

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