

*Brachystegia spiciformis*

## Caesalpinioideae

Indigenous

**English:** Bean-pod tree  
**Nyanja:** Kamponi, mputi, muputi  
**Senga:** Mpapanyozi

**Ecology:** A dominant tree in large areas of Central Africa, north to coastal forests of Kenya and south to South Africa, 0–2,350 m. It is found throughout Zambia on most soils; often growing on rocky slopes, typical of miombo and chipya.

**Uses:** **Firewood**, charcoal, **timber**, beehives, medicine (bark, roots), **fodder**, bee forage, shade, soil improvement, fibre rope (bark), dye (bark).

**Description:** A semi-deciduous tree, usually 8–15 m, crown somewhat flattened; the main trunk dividing **into large branches**. **BARK:** smooth grey-brown, later rough and flaking. **LEAVES:** compound, **3–5 pairs leaflets, largest at tip, to 8 cm long**. **Pink-red young leaves** conspicuous on the bare tree. **FLOWERS:** green, sweet scented, **in short unbranched heads to 6 cm**, August–November. **FRUIT:** flat, **red-brown pods, to 14 cm**, explode to scatter 4–6 seeds, June–November.

**Propagation:** Seedlings, wildings.

**Seed:** No. of seeds per kg: 1,500–2,600.

**treatment:** Not necessary, but germination is improved if the seed is soaked. Soak in hot water and allow to cool for 24 hours. Germinates in 21–30 days under ideal conditions; up to 80% with good seed.

**storage:** Can be stored up to 1 year.

**Management:** Coppicing, pollarding.

**Remarks:** Although seed germinates well, the tree is slow growing. Timber is used as mine props but posts are not durable. Wood is difficult to season. The bark is used for making hives. The tree is often used for charcoal production.

