

Burkea africana

Caesalpinioideae

Indigenous

English: Wild syringa
Nyanja: Kawidzi, mkoso, ngalati
Senga: Kapanga

Ecology: A common tree found throughout tropical Africa; north to Sudan and south to northern South Africa. Widespread in Zambia, occurring in various types of woodland and a wide range of other habitats and altitudes, but characteristic of sandy dambo margins and the lower slopes of rocky hills in the high-rainfall areas, occasionally in miombo woodland.

Uses: **Firewood, charcoal,** timber (furniture), medicine (bark, roots), fodder (leaves), **bee forage,** tannin (bark), gum (bark).

Description: A medium-sized deciduous tree, usually 8–10 m but may reach 20 m. The bole is straight and the **young branches are covered with rusty hairs.** BARK: dark grey becoming grey-brown, **rough and scaly** with age; exudes a red or yellow gum when damaged. LEAVES: compound, crowded at branch ends, **5 to 15 papery leaflets,** grey-green to dark green; **tip rounded and notched.** Leaf fall May–September, and new-leaf flush August–December. FLOWERS: fragrant, **cream-white** or pale green, 5 mm wide, hang in **long spikes to 24 cm,** crowded near ends of branchlets, August–November. Casual flowering May–June. Produce a lot of nectar. FRUIT: **thin flat pod about 8 cm long,** brown; ripen April–October the following year. Contain 1–2 flat brown or green-yellow seeds. Pods remain on the tree for a long time.

Propagation: Seedlings.

Seed: No. of seeds per kg: 12,500–14,000. Germination is good and fairly uniform, 20–70% after 10–25 days.

treatment: Soak seed in hot water and allow to cool for 24 hours.

storage: Can be stored if kept dry and free from insects.

Management: Pruning, lopping.

Remarks: The wood is moderately hard and durable. It saws, works and finishes well, but is difficult to nail. The tree is host to two kinds of edible caterpillars. In Eastern Province, the name *kawidzi* is also used for *Erythrophleum africanum* because it is somewhat similar to *Burkea africana*. It can be distinguished from *E. africanum* by its hairy buds and shoots, non-reticulate bark and more-or-less oval leaflets.

