

Ficus sycomorus**Moraceae**

Indigenous

English: Sycamore fig**Kunda:** Mtowe**Nyanja:** Mukuyu**Ecology:** A large fig, often found near rivers but also in drier woodlands throughout Africa, 0–2,000 m. It is the biblical “sycamore” of Egypt and the Middle East. Common in Eastern Province where it provides fruit and shade in villages.**Uses:** Firewood, timber (carving), bee-hives (bark), food (fruit), medicine (latex, bark), fodder (fruit, leaves), **shade, soil improvement.****Description:** A semi-deciduous tree to 20 m, soon branching to a large crown, often buttressed. **BARK:** distinctive **yellow-cream-brown**, smooth but irregular cracks with age. **LEAVES:** oval to almost circular; over 10 cm across; the **base heart-shaped**; edge wavy; **rough to the touch**, on a hairy stalk, to 3 cm across. **FRUIT:** in leaf axils or dense clusters on main branches and trunk; figs pear-shaped, hairy, yellow-red when ripe.**Propagation** Cuttings strike readily.**Seed:** No. of seeds per kg: 800,000–1,000,000.**treatment:** Not necessary.**storage:** Seeds should not be stored.**Management:** Pruning, lopping.**Remarks:** Fast growing. Fruit eaten by birds, monkeys, baboons, hyrax, impala antelope. For humans these figs are only famine food. The leaves contain about 9% crude protein. The leaves are used to treat snakebite and jaundice. The latex is said to be effective for treating chest diseases, colds and dysentery.