

## Podocarpus usambarensis

## Podocarpaceae

### Indigenous

- Common names:** Bara: laganehel; Chag: msosi, mtokosi; Eng: podo; Haya: msisimu, mziziru; Hehe: muvembanyigo; Iraqw: noki; Lugu: muanziri; Maasai: ol wiriwiri; Nguu: kisasalala; pare: mshunga; Samb: mse, msemawe; Swah: mpodo.
- Ecology:** A tree growing in highland rain forests, 950-2,700 m. In Tanzania it is found in Kilimanjaro, Pare, Usambara, Iringa, Mbulu, Njombe and Uluguru.
- Uses:** Firewood, timber, poles, tool handles, utensils (spoons, combs, mortars), ornamental.
- Description:** A large, evergreen, much-branched tree up to 60 m high with compact crown. **BARK:** pale grey to pale brown smooth when young, becoming rough and flaking with age. **LEAVES:** small, narrow, shiny green, to 5 cm long. Adult leaves parallel sided, but narrowed abruptly to the tip. **CONES:** spherical, up to 3 cm across, green at first turning purple-green after ripening, with thin pulp surrounding one seed.
- Propagation:** Seedlings, wildings.
- Seed info.:** No. of seeds per kg: 200-210. Germination is fair but slow even after complete removal of the seed coat, reaching 60% after 9 weeks.
- treatment:** not necessary, but cracking the woody shell-like covering may hasten germination.
- storage:** can retain viability for 2 years at room temperature.
- Management:** A slow-growing species. It needs nurse trees in the first 15 years of establishment. Rotation period 50-75 years.
- Remarks:** There are two varieties in Tanzania: *P. usambarensis war usambarensis* found in highland areas, and var. *dawei* found in ground-water forests in Minziro Forest Reserve in Bukoba and extending to Masaka in Uganda. *War usambarensis* has a thicker seed shell.

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