

Indigenous

Common names: **English:** Umbrella tree **Kwamba:** Kigere, kikumbu **Luganda:** kaliba, namagulu.

Ecology: A typical secondary-forest tree, easy to recognize, extending into Angola and west to Senegal. Dormant seeds germinate in large quantities when an open space appears in closed forest. It cannot tolerate shade and would normally die after about 20 years in natural forest. In Uganda, it grows chiefly in secondary forests and at forest edges, preferring river banks and wet places near the western shores of Lake Victoria.

Uses: Firewood, timber (dug out canoes), drink (exudate), ornamental, shade.

Description: A **deciduous** tree to 30 m with a straight bole, often with prop roots at the base, sometimes entirely supporting the tree. Branches arise at an angle towards the top of the trunk thus making a fine umbrella crown only one leaf thick. **BARK: thin, pale grey**, with ring marks and corky outgrowths, underbark green-grey. Broken branches,-soft and pithy, exude a lot of **watery sap which can be drunk**. **LEAVES: compound, palmate to 110 cm across with 11-25 shiny green leaflets**, each to 45 cm long on a hairy leaf stalk to 60 cm. Lower surface white hairy. **Leafy stipules at base of stalk red-brown and hairy to 30 cm long**. **FLOWERS:** male trees have **branched stalks about 10 cm** with more than 50 round **pink stamen heads**. Female trees usually have **pairs of yellow-green succulent flower heads** 2-3 cm long on a 12-cm stalk. Both flower heads are protected by **large hairy red bracts**. **FRUIT:** The female head ripens to a **fruiting head about 12 cm long, green and fleshy**, each fruit separate, containing the tiny seeds.

Propagation: Direct sowing on site, seedlings, wildings. Can be established in plantations by broadcasting seed on site.

Seed: The soft yellow fruit fall to the ground when ripe. Mash up fruit in a bucket of water. The seeds will sink to the bottom. Pour off the water, collect and dry.

treatment: not necessary.

storage: up to 2 months in sealed containers in a dry cool place.

Management: Fast growing but short lived; pollarding. Thin young seedlings after broadcasting.

Remarks: Grow as a pure stand or as a single ornamental, for shade or as a nurse tree in plantations. *Musanga leo-errariae*, with slender trunk and smaller leaves and fruit, grows in the upland forests of Kabale, Rukungiri and Bushenyi Districts. It has similar uses to *M. cecropioides*. The family Cecropiaceae has now been separated from the related Moraceae. There are 5 species in East Africa.

Musanga cecropioides

Cecropiaceae

