

Indigenous

Common names: **Rutoro:** Mbahira.

Ecology: A West African rain forest tree extending from Sierra Leone to Angola but rare in Uganda. It grows in tropical rain forest along water courses and is abundant in Itwara forest. It also occurs in Kibale, Kalinzu and Kasyoha-Kitomi forests.

Uses: Firewood, charcoal, timber, shade, ornamental.

Description: A poorly shaped understory evergreen tree to 21 m with a short bole, branching low down and having a spreading crown with dense foliage. Clear lenticel dots on branchlets. **BARK:** grey-white, rough with shallow fissures later scaling in small patches; inner bark yellow. **LEAVES:** **even pinnate with 10-18 pairs more or less opposite leaflets on a stalk up to 60 cm.** Leaflets oblong to 22 x 4 cm, usually smaller, with a **short sharp point**, base unequal and 15-25 clear lateral veins below. Leafstalk flattened at the base. **FLOWERS:** male and female flowers on a stalk beside leaves, on older branches, 18-30 cm long, **club-shaped in bud, calyx and outside of petals with red-brown hairs**, flowers tubular with 5 petals to 2.5 cm long. **FRUIT:** in clusters (sometimes 2-3), **rounded and leathery about 3.5 cm across** with 3-5 sections each containing a seed with a fleshy white aril.

Propagation: Wildings, seedlings.

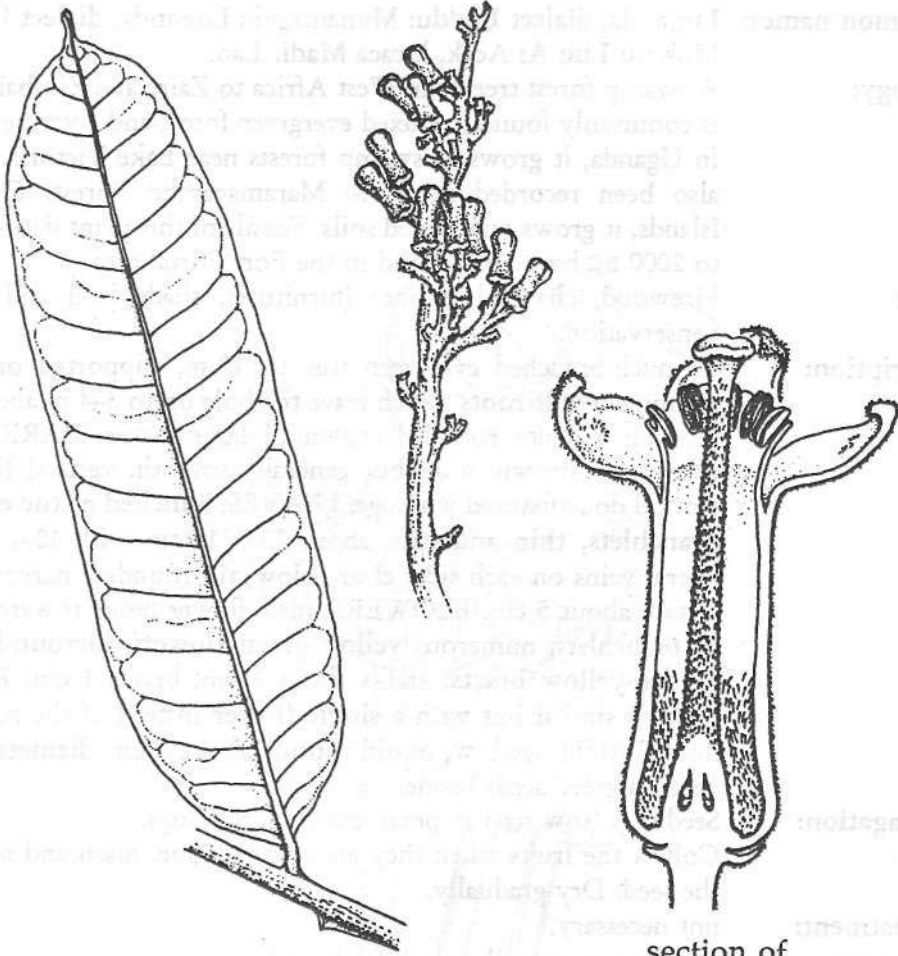
Seed:

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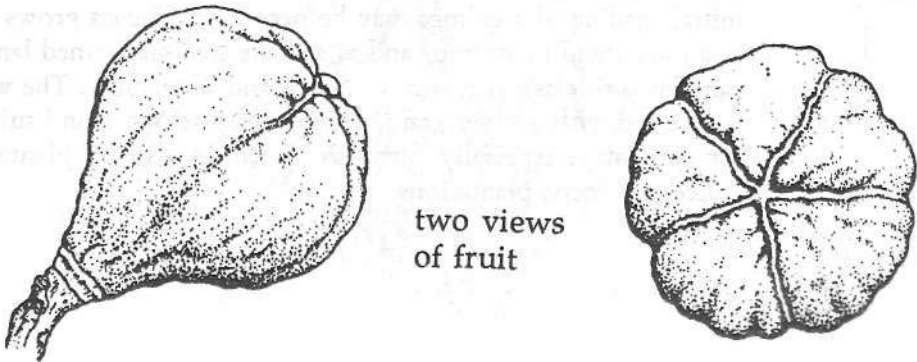
storage:

Management: Coppicing, pollarding.

Remarks: Because the species is rare it is vulnerable and near to extinction. It has a good light timber which is cream coloured at first and later turns light brown. In West Africa, it grows to 35 m and is used for furniture. Bringing the tree into cultivation would help to save it.



section of
male flower



two views
of fruit