LOCAL NAMES
Afrikaans (koffiehardepeer); English (walking stick, panda’s strychnos, Natal teak, coffee hard pear, coffee bean strychnos); Zulu (umqalothi, umnono, umdunye)

BOTANIC DESCRIPTION
Strychnos henningsii is a small erect, much-branched tree, 2-12 m tall with a clean green-reddish stem. Bark peeling, crown compact with dark green, glossy foliage. Twigs with pale ashy or straw coloured waxy skin splitting lengthwise. Lenticels few and inconspicuous.

Leaves opposite, subsessile, ovate, 2.5-6.5 cm long and 0.8-4.5 cm wide, margins entire, leaf tips acuminate. Leaves strongly 3-5 nerved from base, cuneate or rarely subcordate at base.

Floral cymes borne on flat clusters in the leaf axils, 2-2.5 mm long, 4 mm wide when open, scented, yellowish-green in colour turning orange with age. Ovary globose; style short.

Fruit up to 1.9 cm long and 6-11 mm broad, oblong or roundish, 1-2 seeded (coffee-like); red, brown or orange when ripe.

The genus Strychnos has about 190 species mainly found in the tropics. The specific epithet honours Professor Paul Christoph Henning, 1841-1908, a mycologist at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Berlin-Dahlem.

BIOLOGY
S. henningsii is hermaphrodite but reproduces cleistogamously in some localities.
ECOLOGY
S. henningsii commonly occurs in dry or moist forests, wooded hillsides, evergreen thickets on rocky hills, coastal forests and stream banks. It is often associated with Olea and Podocarpus spp.

BIOPHYSICAL LIMITS
Altitude: 340-2,000 m

DOCUMENTED SPECIES DISTRIBUTION
Native: Angola, Kenya, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda
Exotic:

The map above shows countries where the species has been planted. It does neither suggest that the species can be planted in every ecological zone within that country, nor that the species can not be planted in other countries than those depicted. Since some tree species are invasive, you need to follow biosafety procedures that apply to your planting site.
Strychnos henningsii

Gilg

Loganiaceae

PRODUCTS
Food: In East Africa S. henningsii is used in the preparation of fatty-meat and milk soups.

Timber: Its valued timber is brown to dark grey, heavy, hard, durable and termite-resistant. Wood used for fencing, hut poles, and tool handles.

Poison: The bark contains a poisonous bitter alkaloid causing paralysis. Despite this the plant still has significant medicinal uses.

Medicine: S. henningsii is used in African traditional medicine to treat various ailments including rheumatism, syphilis, gastrointestinal disorders (purgative) and snake bites. The ground bark is a mouth antiseptic and applied onto wounds in cattle and horses to hasten healing. Some of the applications can be explained partially by the presence of retuline-like alkaloids. S. henningsii has potential in the development of new antinociceptive and antispasmodic drugs.

SERVICES
Erosion control: The species is important in protecting soils from water erosion in highland areas.

Shade or shelter: S. henningsii is an important shade tree.

Ornamental: The physical attributes of S. henningsii, shiny foliage, pleasant shade and fragrant flowers make it a suitable choice for gardening.

Boundary or barrier or support: S. henningsii is used as a live fence and its poles are good for fencing.
**Strychnos henningsii**

**Loganiaceae**

**Gilg**

**TREE MANAGEMENT**
Coppices well; normally managed through coppice.

**GERmplasm management**
Pulp should be removed from the seed before sowing. Seeds exhibit orthodox storage behaviour.
Strychnos henningsii
Loganiaceae

FURTHER READING


SUGGESTED CITATION