

Indigenous

Trade names: Sapele, muyovu.

Common names: **Luganda:** Muyovu **Runyoro:** Muyovu **Rutoro:** Muyovu.

Ecology: Sepele is the name of a Nigerian town. This tree is an important timber tree occurring widely in tropical Africa from Sierra Leone to Uganda and Zaire. In Uganda it grows in mixed to climax tropical rain forest, in thickets and in gallery forest in Budongo, Bugoma, Mabira and West Mengo Forests, 1,100-1,500 m.

Uses: Firewood, charcoal, timber (furniture), veneer, shade, ornamental (avenues).

Description: A deciduous forest tree **to 55 m or more**, the trunk tall and straight, often **clear 25-30 m**, the rounded crown medium sized. **Buttresses alone up to 3 m**. The trunk may be 1 m or more across. **BARK: brown and smooth at first**, turning grey and flaking towards the base in **irregular scales on mature trees**. **LEAVES:** pinnate on stalks to 30 cm, tufted at the ends of branches, **11-19 leaflets**, often alternate, lowest pairs oval, others long oval up **to 12 cm long**, tip pointed, 6-9 lateral veins and a close network of veins on both surfaces. **FLOWERS:** tiny, white on a branched stalk to 25 cm. **FRUIT:** a **brown woody capsule** about 14 cm, rounded at the tip, breaking into 5 parts. **The capsule opens first at the tip, then the base and pieces fall away one at a time**. Winged seeds about 8 cm long are attached alternately left and right to the central column.

Propagation: Seedlings, wildings.

Seed: The winged seeds get blown several metres away from the mother tree. Thus collection is difficult and each seed has to be picked up individually from the ground.

treatment: Soaking in cold water for 12 hours will hasten germination,
storage: seeds are very susceptible to insect attack. Store in a sealed container in a cool place but before doing so discard those showing signs of having been attacked. Add ash to reduce insect damage.

Management: In the forest, seedlings germinate and survive well, but when planting seedlings in open areas, tending and shade are required until established. Plant under nurse trees wherever possible.

Remarks: This valuable tree has been removed from most of the forests of Uganda. The timber is brown and fragrant. It is heavier, stronger, harder and more durable than mahogany but more difficult to work. It is a first-class timber used for indoor and outdoor furniture and beautiful veneers. In West Africa it has been a valuable export commodity for many years. Plant in pure stands or with crops or as an avenue tree. Its shade is quite light. It is claimed that this is the tallest tree in Africa.

Entandrophragma cylindricum

Meliaceae

enlarged
flower



winged seed



capsule

