

Dalbergia nitidula

Papilionoideae

Indigenous

- Common names:** Eng: glossy flat-bean, purplewood dalbergia; Gogo: mjiha; Nyam: kafinulambasa, kapondolampasa, mfunfu; Nguu: mhuga; Nyat: mobibi; Sangu: msinatemo; Yao: unhungu.
- Ecology:** A tree growing in deciduous woodlands, including Brachystegia woodlands, bushlands, thickets and wooded grassland, 350-1,650 m. Also found in Rwanda, Burundi Mozambique, Malawi, Angola and South Africa.
- Uses:** Firewood, charcoal, poles, tools (digging), handles, carving utensils (pestles), fodder, dye (bark, roots).
- Description:** A deciduous shrub or small tree 4-12 m tall with stiff erect branches to an open crown. **BARK:** grey-brown to reddistt rough and fissured, flaking longitudinally, branchlets with dense yellow-brown hairs. **LEAVES:** compound, 4-7 pairs leaflets opposite or nearly so, plus one at the tip; each leaflet usually 2-3 cm, up to 8 cm, tip round, pointed or notched, base rounded, clear veins below and very hairy **FLOWERS:** white flowers before leaves in dense branched heads to 10 cm, each flower small, pea-shaped. (Often rounded galls (balls of dark, needle-like growths) grow instead.) **FRUIT:** flat, thin brown pods, 7 x 1.5 cm, sharply tipped, do not open but rot on the ground to release 1-2 seeds.
- Propagation:** Seedlings and suckers.
- Seed info.:** There are about 16,000 short pieces of broken pods (each containing one seed) per kg. The germination is good and uniform.
- treatment:** pods should be broken into one-seeded pieces, soaked in 4 cold water for 6 hours and sown together with the seed as extraction is difficult. .
- storage:** can keep viability only for a few months. The pods are susceptible to attack by insects.
- Management:** Slow growing; coppicing.
- Remarks:** Roots are poisonous to human beings. The purple heartwood has been used for walking sticks. It is very durable and termite resistant but so small that it is oidl suitable for tool handles, building poles, fence posts, etc.

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