

Indigofera swaziensis

Papilionoideae

Indigenous

Common names: Eng: velvet indigo tree; Nyam: igangula; Rangi: kinkusa; Samb: mshushulambuzi.

Ecology: Widespread at margins of upland evergreen forests and in riverine fringe of bushlands, 600-2,100 m. It is found in Swaziland, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique and the Sudan. In Tanzania it is found in Mwanza, Musoma, Mbulu, Kondo, Tabora, Iringa, etc.

Uses: Firewood, fodder (for goats), medicine (roots), bee forage, withes (branches).

Description: A shrub or slender tree 3-6 m high with tough branchlets. BARK: dark grey, smooth, fibrous, hairy on branchlets. LEAVES: compound with 4-8 pairs of leaflets plus a terminal leaflet on a hairy stalk, each leaflet oblong to 2-5 cm x 0.7 cm with a hair-like tip. FLOWERS: small, pea shaped, about 5 mm long, the wing petals deep pink, in many-flowered sprays to 6 cm long. FRUIT: straight hairy brown pods to 3 cm, tip sharp pointed, breaking open with up to 10 seeds in sections.

Propagation: Seedlings, root suckers.

Seed info.: No. of seeds per kg: about 83,000. Germination is very good and fast.

treatment: soak in cold water for 12 hours.

storage: can be stored for a long time at room temperature if well dried and kept insect free.

Management: Slow growing.

Remarks: Roots are used as an aphrodisiac for men. The tough bendy young branches can be used to bind up bundles.

