

Lovoa swynnertonii

Meliaceae

Indigenous

Common names: **English:** Brown mahogany **Luganda:** Nabulagala **Rukiga:** Mukumbo **Runyankore:** Mukusu **Rutoro:** Mukusu.

Ecology: A valuable timber tree of lowland and mid-altitude rain forest found in East Africa with a southern limit in Zimbabwe and Mozambique. In Uganda, it grows in mixed rain forest and is abundant in Kibale Forest.

Uses: Firewood, charcoal, timber (vener, furniture).

Description: An evergreen forest tree 20-40 m, **often a clear bole to 30 m**, the crown narrow or spreading. Buttresses less than 2 m up the bole or absent, **surface roots often strongly developed**. The trunk can be 2 m across. **BARK:** brown-grey-black, fairly smooth, **flaking in round pieces 2-30 cm across**. **LEAVES:** even pinnate **to 30 cm long with 3-8 pairs leaflets each long oval to 10 cm**, shiny green above, edge wavy, tip shortly pointed, **base clearly one-sided**. **FLOWERS:** small and **white**, four parts, but in profusion **in dense terminal heads to 15 cm**, grey and hairy at first, attracting butterflies. Sexes separate on the same tree. **FRUIT:** a small **hanging woody cylinder**, the capsule about **5 cm x 2 cm**, **dark brown-black with scattered white lenticels, splitting open at the tip into 5 characteristic parts**. Many **oval winged seeds, about 4 cm long**.

Propagation: Seedlings, wildings.

Seed: The winged seeds are smaller than those of *Entandophragma* spp. They are hard to collect and must be searched for near the mother tree. No. of seeds per kg: about 4,400.

treatment: not necessary.

storage: seeds are easily attacked by insects. Store in sealed containers in a cool place and add ash to reduce insect damage.

Management:

Remarks: *Lovoa swynnertonii* can be planted in pure stands or intercropped in banana, coffee and cocoa plantations. The species is an important one for timber, maturing about 30 years after planting. The wood is fairly plain but durable and resists borers.

