

Indigenous

Trade name: Lunaba

Common names: **English:** Pycnanthus, false nutmeg, African nutmeg **Luganda:** Lunaba, munaba **Lugwere:** Maddula **Luo J:** Muno **Lusamia:** Ongono **Rutoro:** Mukogota.

Ecology: A widespread tree from West Africa occurring in wetter forests. In Uganda it grows in gallery forest, riverine forest, thickets, forest edges and mixed forests, being abundant near Lake Victoria and in West Bugwe Forest,

Uses: Shade (banana, coffee and cocoa), ornamental, soap (seeds), illuminant (seeds).

Description: An evergreen forest tree to 30 m with a straight slender bole and small crown. **Upper branches are in whorls, clearly at right angles to the trunk** but drooping at the tips. Buttresses, if present, are quite small. **BARK:** grey-red, generally smooth but with shallow fissures, if cut exuding an orange juice which turns red. **All young parts densely covered with orange-brown hairs.** **LEAVES:** alternate, grow in 2 well-marked ranks; **oblong 12-20 cm**, hairy above, **dense brown hairs below** (often attacked by insects), **the tip suddenly pointed**, base heart-shaped to a stalk about 1 cm, **20-30 clear lateral veins** are looped near the margin. **FLOWERS:** male and female flowers on different parts of the tree, usually flowering at different times. Male **flower heads in clusters beside leaves**, 15 cm with small **orange-brown flowers**—no petals. **FRUIT:** in dense clusters, **oval-oblong to 4.0 cm, orange-brown**, the thick shell splitting lengthwise to reveal 1 nut. This kernel is brown and ribbed but enclosed by a **fleshy branched aril**, bright red when fresh. Both seed and aril are aromatic like true nutmeg.

Propagation: Seedlings (sow in pots), wildings.

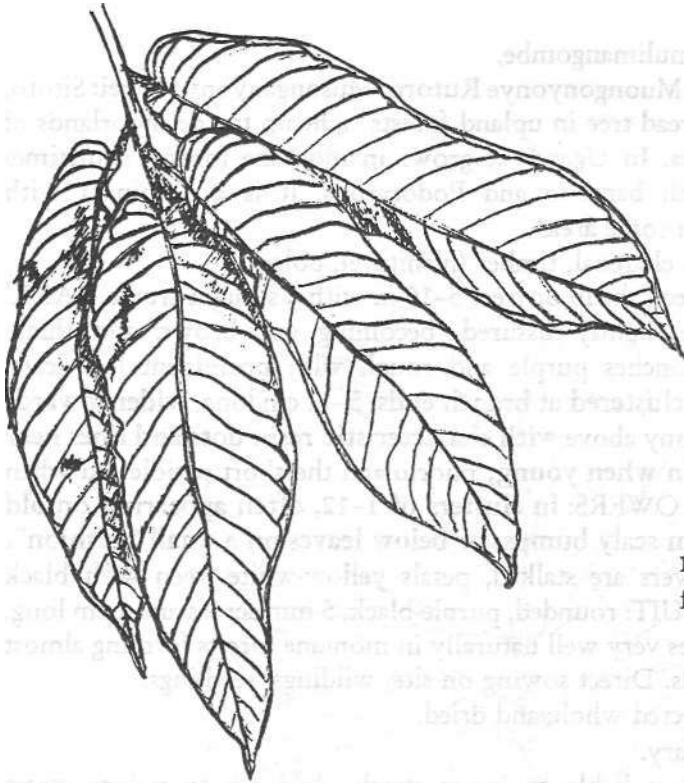
Seed: At the right season seeds can be collected from under the mother tree.

treatment: soaking in cold water for 24 hours will hasten germination.

storage: can be stored if spread out on a cement floor.

Management: Fast growing.

Remarks: The seeds will burn like candles and an oil extracted from them is used in West Africa as an illuminant and for making soap. This useful tree and its oil should be promoted.



male and female flower spikes

