

Indigenous

Trade names: Azobe, ekki, meni oil tree.

Common names: **Lugbara:** Iku **Luo:** Oteng **Luo A:** Otlug **Madi:** Liku.

Ecology: One of the largest African timber trees from Sierra Leone and Gabon and a major export from Cameroon to France. In Uganda, it is not plentiful but grows in high-rainfall wooded grassland and woodland, very often with *Butyrospermum paradoxum*. It also grows in north-eastern Zaire, Sudan and northern Uganda (the Guinea-Sudano ecozone).

Uses: Firewood, charcoal, timber (stools and chairs), building poles, ornamental, boundary marker, insecticide, soap.

Description: An evergreen savannah tree to 60 m with a long cylindrical bole and heavy ascending branches to a long narrow crown, occasionally with low buttresses. **BARK:** red-brown, deeply fissured and peeling in loose flakes; can be grey-black and corky. **LEAVES:** **clustered at branch ends, distinctive, strap-shaped and shiny** (to 60 cm and 12.5 cm broad) usually 30 cm long, the tip usually **blunt and notched**. **Lateral veins very many and parallel, angled to the midrib**. Edges wavy, base narrowed to a **stalk about 2 cm**. Young leaves bright red so the tree appears covered in attractive "flower". **FLOWERS:** in **big lax terminal heads** seen all over the crown, each flower fragrant, **2.5 cm across** with **5 unequal white petals and 5 sepals, numerous yellow stamens in the centre**. **FRUIT:** **2 sepals enlarge** around the **bottle-shaped woody capsule**, 3 cm long. One sepal to 10 cm, the other 6 cm, become wings which aid dispersal as the capsule falls. The capsule splits to release oval brown seeds 1-5 cm (May-June).

Propagation: Seedlings, direct sowing at site.

Seed: The capsule splits open to release the seed. No. of seed per kg: 250-300.

treatment: immerse for 15 minutes in boiling water, allow to cool and soak for 12 hours.

storage: in sealed containers in a cool place.

Management: Initial tending is necessary until the tree has been established. Pollarding.

Remarks: The beautiful flowers make this a striking ornamental tree. The wood is used by the Acholi for making stools and chairs and oil from the seed by the Lugbara-Aringa people for soap making and lamps. The plant is also used as an insecticide, but the active ingredient has not been identified. The timber is the most durable in West Africa and is used for heavy construction, etc., especially for harbours as it resists fungi, termites and borers. It is stronger, harder and heavier than teak. Plant as a stand or boundary marker.

