

Indigenous

Common names: **Bena:** msasati; Eng: smelly berry vitex; **Fipa:** mchinka, mkiinka, mfulu; Hehe: mfudululenga, msasati; **Nyam:** msungwe, msungwi mtalali; **Nyat:** msasati; **Nyir:** msasati, msassi; Rangi: mjumbau; **Suku:** mgukubi, msungwi; **Swah:** mfudumaji, mtalali; **Zigua:** mgobe; **Zinza:** mkakata, msungwa.

Ecology: A shrub or tree found at low to medium altitudes on stony outcrops and in deciduous woodland from Kenya and Zambia to South Africa. In Tanzania it is widespread from the coast to Tabora and the Lake Victoria islands, and common north of Kongwa. Also found in riverine forest near Kigoma, 0-1,600 m.

Uses: Firewood, food (fruit), bee forage, shade.

Description: A stiffly branched deciduous shrub or small tree to 8 m. **BARK:** rough grey to brown with **deep longitudinal fissures**. Branchlets densely covered with brown-red hairs. **LEAVES:** compound, opposite, with **5 leaflets**, sometimes 3 leaflets (lower 2 leaflets deformed or absent), widest above the middle, **abouro cm long, short soft hairs above but dense orange hairs below**, on hairy stalks to 9 cm. **FLOWERS:** few flowers in a branched head on **stalks to 6 cm**, each flower 5 mm, all violet-blue or all white with upper lip only blue; **petals twice as long as calyx lobes, ovary hairy**. **FRUIT:** rounded to oblong, 2-3 cm long, green at first, turning black when ripe, juicy. **Calyx lobes enlarge, cover the fruit but later open out or bend back.**

Propagation: Seedlings, direct sowing.

Seed **info.:** No. of seeds per kg: about 1,000. Hard seed coat which inhibits germination, but may be broken by forest fires. Germination is poor and sporadic.

treatment: Soak in cold water for 24 hours. Scratch the seed coat surface to increase water absorption.

storage: seeds can be stored for up to 12 months.

Management: Coppicing.

Remarks: This tree regenerates naturally from seed. Clearing land can help natural regeneration as the species is a light demander and prefers open areas. It is usually left in the farms for its fruit and shade. The fruit contains vitamin C and stains a dark purple-black. It has an unpleasant smell and persistent taste, but is much sought after in some areas.

