



***Brachystegia spiciformis***

**Family:** Leguminosae

**Mtundu**

**Other Common Names:** Messassa (Mozambique), Mundu, Myombo, Mtondo (Tanzania), Muputu (Zambia).

**Distribution:** Savanna forests of East Africa, mostly Tanzania, Zambia, and Mozambique; reaching from the coastal belt to the highlands.

**The Tree:** In moister areas may exceed a height of 80 ft with a clear bole of 30 ft; trunk diameters 1 to 3 ft; heavily branched.

**The Wood:**

**General Characteristics:** Heartwood variable from pale brown to a red brown, darkening on exposure, striping sometimes present; sapwood creamy or white, clearly demarcated. Texture coarse; grain irregular and interlocked; lustrous; without characteristic odor or taste.

**Weight:** Basic specific gravity (ovendry weight/green volume) 0.67; air-dry density 51 pcf.

**Mechanical Properties:** (2-in. standard)

Moisture content (%)	Bending strength (Psi)	Modulus of elasticity (1,000 psi)	Maximum crushing strength (Psi)
12% (5)	17,300	2,080	9,570

Janka side hardness 1,830 lb at 12% moisture content.

**Drying and Shrinkage:** Dries slowly with some tendency to warp, mostly twist, appreciable checking and end splitting. Kiln schedule T3-C2 is suggested for 4/4 stock and T3-C1 for 8/4. Shrinkage green to 12% moisture content: radial 3.0%; tangential 4.4%. Movement in service is rated as medium.

**Working Properties:** The timber is difficult to work and to saw, moderate blunting of cutters, interlocked grain liable to tear in planing, sands to a good finish and polishes well, very poor steam-bending properties.

**Durability:** Nondurable and vulnerable to termite attack; sapwood readily attacked by staining fungi.

**Preservation:** Heartwood is extremely resistant to preservative treatments; sapwood moderately resistant.

**Uses:** General construction work, furniture components, parquet flooring.

**Additional Reading:** (3), (5), (52)

3. Bolza, E., and W. G. Keating. 1972. African timbers-the properties, uses, and characteristics of 700 species. CSIRO. Div. of Build. Res., Melbourne, Australia.

5. Bryce, J. M. 1967. The commercial timbers of Tanzania. Tanzanian For. Div. Util. Sec. Moshi.  
52. Tanzania: Util. Div. For. Dep. 1961. Timbers of Tanganyika: *Brachystegia spiciformis* (Mtundu). Moshi.

***From: Chudnoff, Martin. 1984. Tropical Timbers of the World. USDA Forest Service. Ag. Handbook No. 607.***