

## *Cola quentinii* Cheek

## Sterculiaceae

### Kola kubwa

Status global: **Endemic (CR)** Status local: **Common**

A shrub or small tree endemic to Kimboza and two other locations. It is locally common in unburnt and *Cedrela* free forest.

### Striking identification features

- often multi-stemmed
- large leaves with basal pulvinus
- red-purple/yellow flowers on stems
- fruit with up to 5 follicles



### Description

*Stature:* shrub or small tree, often multi-stemmed.

*Size:* to 6(-15) m tall.

*Bark:*

*Leaves:* large, but variable in size (14-52 × 7.5-27 cm), dark green leaves, petiole (0.9-27 cm long), basal pulvinus (3-8 mm wide).

*Flower:* unisexual occurring on the same individual on 1- to 4-flowered woody burrs of the main stem or branches. Flowers (ca 2 cm across) on short stalks are red-purple with yellow anthers or yellow stigmas.

*Fruit:* large fruit (6.5-8.5 cm across) consisting of up to 5 roundish follicles.

*Seed:*

*Left:* As a result of the 2021 drought there was a lot of foliage dieback in many trees but it affected the lower leaves only. *Inset:* multi-stemmed individual which may arise as regrowth after fire.

*Right:* male (top) and female (bottom) flowers.



**Status and distribution:** This species is endemic to the Uluguru mountains and found at only three sites, including Kimboza. It has been assessed as Critically Endangered.

**Habitat requirements:** In Kimboza it is locally dominant in the shrub layer of steepish slopes on shallow soils. Much of its habitat has been burnt by fires spreading from outside the reserve. These burnt areas form a mosaic with 'intact' forest and are dominated by the invasive *Cedrela odorata*. *Cola quentinii* has not been observed to recolonize these near monotypic young stands *Cedrela*.

**Phenology:** Observed to flower in September to early November and fruits in December.

**Reproduction:** Flowers of separate sexes occur on the same individuals.

**Uses in East Africa:** None are known.

**Local uses:** None are known.



### Sources and further information

*Botanical description:* Cheek & Dorr (2007)

*Herbarium specimens:*

Luke 772 (EA,K,NHT,BR), 1987-11-04, fl  
Luke *et al.* 7624 (EA,K,NHT,BR), 2001-09-19, fl, type

Cheek, M. & Dorr, L. (2007) Sterculiaceae. In Beentje, H.J. & Ghazanfar, S.A. (Eds) Flora of tropical East Africa. Kew Publishing, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.

*Left:* the first ever collection of the fruit (follicle to 4 cm long).