

Strychnos decussata (Pappe) Gilg

Hazomby

This small tree is common in most of the Kirindy forest. In places it is the dominant component of the shrub layer.



Description

Stature: erect or arching in older individuals.

Size: shrub to small tree.

Bark: smooth but finely cracked. Blackish with grey patches.

Leaves: evergreen, the shiny leaves (5 x 2 cm) are opposite, simple and entire. The petiole is bright orange.

Flower:

Fruit: green drupe with one seed.

Seed:

Similar species

This species can be readily confused with another species of *Strychnos* but *S. mostueoides* is usually multi-stemmed and is often scrambling over tree when older. Its bark is light grey. At first sight the leaves of the 2 species appear to be identical but on the upper leaf surface the midrib and side veins are yellowish in *S. mostueoides* (see photo below).

Loganiaceae

Striking features

- evergreen single stem tree.
- shiny leaves with an orange petiole.
- blackish bark.



Ecology

Status and distribution: Common in western Madagascar.

Habitat requirements: no distinct preferences.

Phenology: evergreen.

Kirindy: often the dominant undertorey shrub.

Reproduction: profuse seed production most years and extensive natural regeneration.



Left: *S. mostueoides*

Right: *S. decussata*

Uses

Wood used in traditional buildings.

A leaf decoction is used against rheumatic pain and venereal diseases are treated with a bark decoction.

Sources and further information

General:

Botanical description:

Forestry:

Kirindy: Anon. (1993) no. 129 & 237, Norscia & Borgognini-Tarli (2006)

Herbarium specimen: