

Sterculia oblonga

Scientific name: *Sterculia oblonga* (Mast.).

Family: Malvaceae.

Distribution and conservation status: usually found in drier areas (with annual rainfall of about 1800 mm) of semi-deciduous and secondary forests of the tropical African belt, from Guinea and Liberia going east to the Central African Republic and south to Gabon, Congo, and northern DR Congo; **VU** due to over-exploitation and slow growth rate.

Common names: Yellow Sterculia (English), Oroforofo (Yoruba), Okoko (Edo).

Fruits/seeds: fruits consist of 4-5 woody follicles, 10-15 cm long, glabrescent and green-yellow-brown. The seeds are ovoid-shaped, 2.8 ± 0.4 mm (SD) in diameter with a bright yellow and fleshy seed coat.

Fruiting time: September - March.

Seed extraction method: remove seeds from the pod.

Type of seed: recalcitrant with epigeal germination.

Sowing method: direct sowing.

Sowing medium: forest top soil, river sand and composted sawdust.

Germination period: 7-15 days but the germination rate can be low.

Germination percentage: 60-70% for fresh seed, decreasing to about 15% after 3 weeks.

Planting: full shade.

Growth and development: slow-growing with an average height of 30 cm per year, but a 9-year-old tree could be 9-15 m tall.

Notes: most pods fall near the parent tree with seeds still intact, but seeds are highly susceptible to rodent or bird attack.