

Threatened plants of western Cameroon

Ternstroemia polypetala (Tea Family)

If you have seen this tree please contact the Kilum-Ijim Forest Project

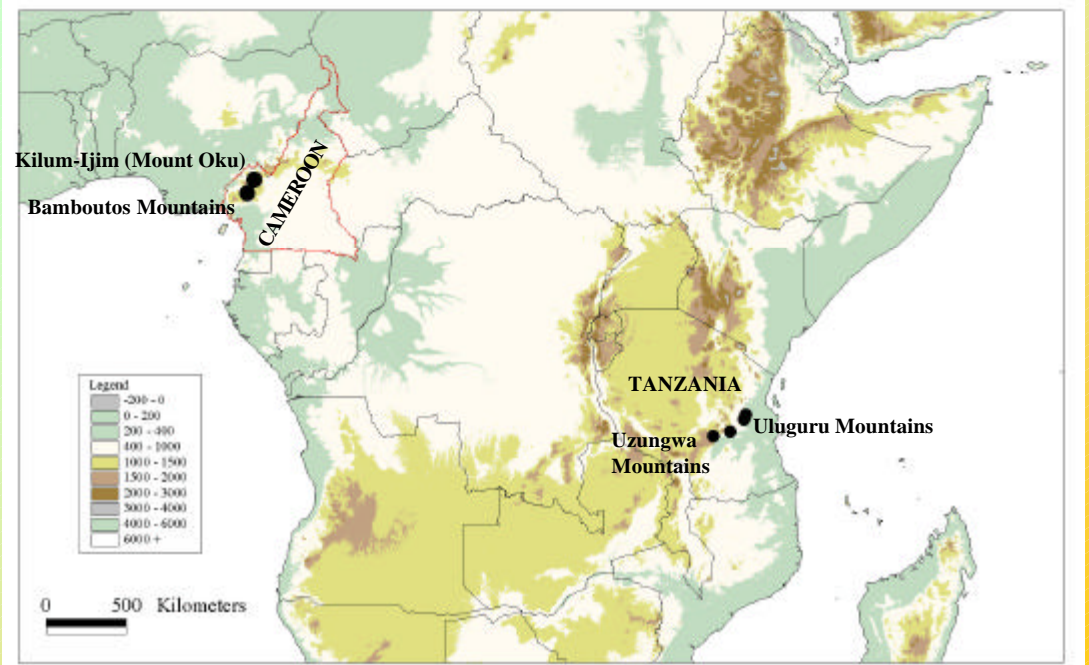
Ternstroemia polypetala Melch.



Ijim landscape
1996



The remaining forest is under serious threat from changes in land use.



Map representing the world-wide distribution for *Ternstroemia polypetala*

TERNSTROEMIA POLYPETALA—1, flowering branch, $\times 1$; 2, σ flower, vertical section, $\times 2$; 3, stamens, $\times 4$; 4, ρ flower, vertical section $\times 2$; 5, staminodes, $\times 4$; 6, pistil $\times 4$; 7, pistil with stigma removed to show style, $\times 4$; 8, fruit $\times 2$; 9, fruit, transverse section, $\times 2$; 10, seed, longitudinal section, $\times 3$; 11, seed, transverse section, $\times 5$. 1-3 from Drummond & Hemsley, 1647; 4-7 from D.K.S. Grant, 992; 8-11 from E. M. Bruce, 996.

A single tree of *Ternstroemia polypetala* was found by Cameroonian botanist Martin Etuge in a small forest at Tum, near the Ijim mountain forest in November 1996. By 1998, that 15m tall tree could not be found again and much of that forest had been felled.

This species has been found only once before in West-Central Africa. In 1977 a single tree was found in the Bamboutos Mountains, 15 miles north of Dschang. It also occurs in East Africa where it is rare. This tree may now be extinct in West Africa, as trees are felled to make way for farms and grazing land.

Destruction of the montane forest results in the loss of rare plant and animal species, as well as many products which are useful to people. Even the smallest patches of remaining forest deserve protection as they may well contain unique species.