

Why are trees important?

Due to the population explosion and industrial development, indigenous forests are becoming extinct. Therefore, a means of preserving the natural forests and vegetation is of utmost importance as our lives depend on them for our survival.

Our traditional medicine practitioners and doctors need to follow a common goal: conserving our natural resources in order to save God's creature – man of this world. Trees are not only for a function, but are also pleasing to the eye, more especially if one visualises a landscape without trees.

1

African Wattle

Afrikaans: huilboom

Zulu: Umthobo

Latin: *Peltophorum Africanum*

Habitat: occurs on wooded grasslands; woodlands and along vleis, mostly on well-drained soils

Flowering: from September to April

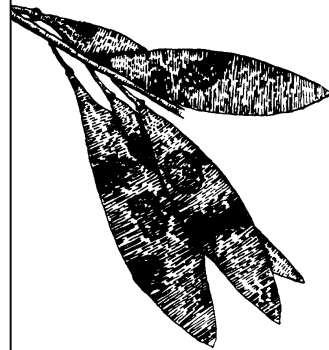
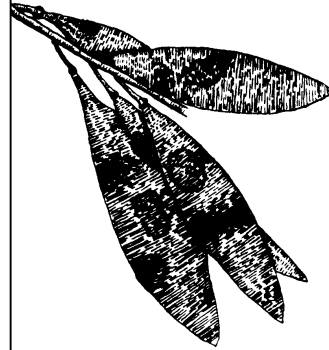
Fruiting: from December to May

Uses

- The powdered root is applied on wounds to speed up healing
- The root sap is orally taken to relieve stomach disorders and get rid of intestinal parasites
- The wood makes good fuel
- Steam from boiled leaves is directed into the mouth to relieve toothache

Economic values

- Young leaves and pods relished by cattle and goats
- A valuable tree for beekeepers as it is a good source of nectar and pollen
- A quality timber for furniture and tool handles



2

Matumi

Afrikaans: mingerhout

Zulu: Umhlume

Latin: *Breonadia salicina*

Habitat: Found along banks of streams, sometimes with roots in water

Flowering: from December to March

Fruiting: from June to August

Uses

- Popular tree for making bonsai specimens
- Extract of the bark used for stomach complaints
- One of the best indigenous woods for making furniture
- Very popular for railway sleepers up until the 1960s

3

Red Ivory

Afrikaans: rooi-ivoor

Zulu: Umneyi

Latin: *Berchemia zeyheri*

Habitat: found in open woodlands and rocky hillsides, rocky ridges and along drainage lines

Flowering: from September to January

Fruiting: from November to April

Uses

- Very agreeable, sweet edible fruit from which jams can be made and stored for future use
- The bark is used as fibre dye
- Powdered roots are smoked as a cure for headaches
- Extract made from bark used to relieve backache

Economic values

- The bark is eaten by porcupine and leaves are browsed by wild animals
- The ripe fruit is a favourite with most fruit-eating birds

