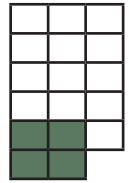


Vitellaria paradoxa

(*Butyrospermum paradoxum*)

Sapotaceae



Indigenous

Agn: *Wedo*

Eng: *Shea-butter tree*

Ecology

This well-known and commercially important tree is restricted to the dry savannah and grassed woodlands of northern tropical Africa, from West Africa across Central Africa into Uganda and Ethiopia. In Ethiopia, it grows in Dry and Moist Bereha to Dry and Moist Kolla agroclimatic zones, 300 m, annual rainfall about 1000 mm.

Use

The fruit used as vegetable oil /butter for cooking and skin lotion. Has high potential for soap making. The wood is good for fuelwood.

Description

A small to medium deciduous tree 13-20 m, much branched to a dense rounded crown, the stout bole to about 4 m before branching. Lower branches often fall to the ground, others twisted and thick, with leaf scars. **BARK:** Easy to recognize: dark grey-brown-black, thick and rough, deeply fissured into rectangular shapes like a crocodile skin. **LEAVES:** Crowded at the end of very short, thick branchlets, covered with leaf scars. Young leaves are reddish, hairy. They becoming smooth, dark green and tough, oval-oblong about 20 cm long, tip rounded and base narrowed to a long stalk up to half the length of the leaf

blade, about 10 cm. **FLOWERS:** Small, cream-white and fragrant, appearing in dense clusters on short branchlets when the tree is almost bare. **FRUIT:** A large round green berry, 4-6 cm long. Inside sweet pulp surrounds a single shiny brown seed with a white scar on one side.

Propagation

From cuttings, seedlings and wildings.

Seed

Treatment:

Storage:

Management

Remarks

Flowers in January to February and fruits in last April to June. Initial fruiting takes some 10 years but may be shortened if propagated from cuttings.



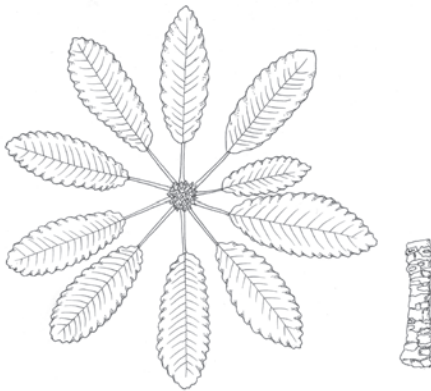
Photos: Patrick Maundu

Photos: Patrick Maundu

flower cluster



seed



fruit

