

(Reprinted from "Rhodesia Agricultural Journal.")

Vol. 51, No. 2

March-April, 1954

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ISSUED BY AUTHORITY OF

The Minister of Agriculture and Lands

Notes on Indigenous Trees and Shrubs of S. Rhodesia

Cordyla africana Lour (Papilionaceae)

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SALISBURY:

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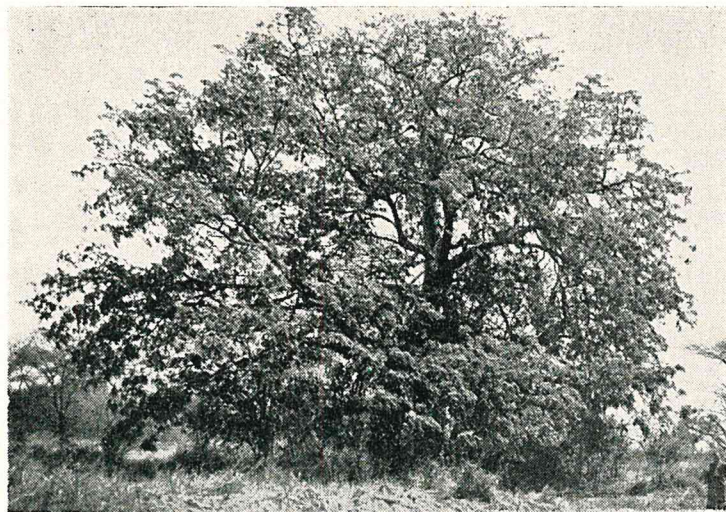
Cordyla africana Lour
(Papilionaceae)

Common Name.— Mutondo. **Native Names.**— Mufondo, mutondo (Chis.).

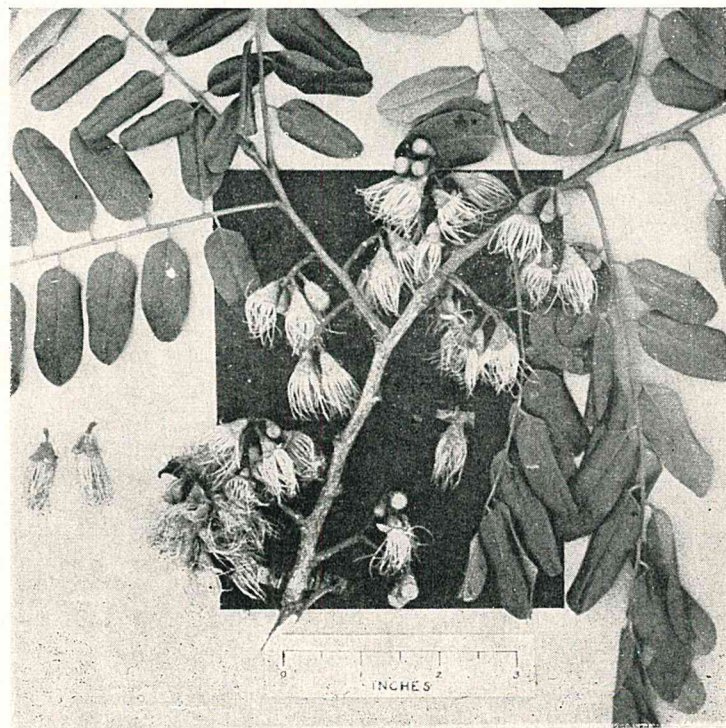
General Description.—This is a fairly large spreading tree of the low veld. It is found up to 4 ft. breast height diameter and 70 ft. in height. The leaves are alternate, imparipinnate (i.e., there is an odd terminal leaflet) and up to 10 inches in length including the petiole, which is about one inch long. There are small, narrow stipules, but these fall off early. Each leaf has up to 19, alternate, or more or less opposite, leaflets. Leaflets are about $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches long and are of a somewhat oblong shape. They are dark green and glabrous above and paler beneath and negligibly hairy. Leaflet stalks are about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch in length. The yellow flowers, which appear with the new leaves, are to be seen during the latter part of September and October. They are in racemes each containing up to about 12 flowers. Trees are a lovely sight when flowering is profuse. Sepals are present but petals are absent. There are some 30 or more stamens joined at the base and each consisting of a thin, yellow filament and small anther. The ovary is on a gynophore or stalk. The fruit, which ripens about January and which may be as large as a lemon, is a stalked, yellow, fleshy, ovoid, indehiscent legume. There are usually 2 to 4 seeds in each fruit. The slightly rough bark of the tree is of a greyish colour.

Distribution.—The mutondo is a scattered tree of the low veld and may be seen in the south-eastern and extreme northern parts of the Colony, where it is often found growing in alluvial soils. It is also found in adjoining territories and as far north as the Sudan.

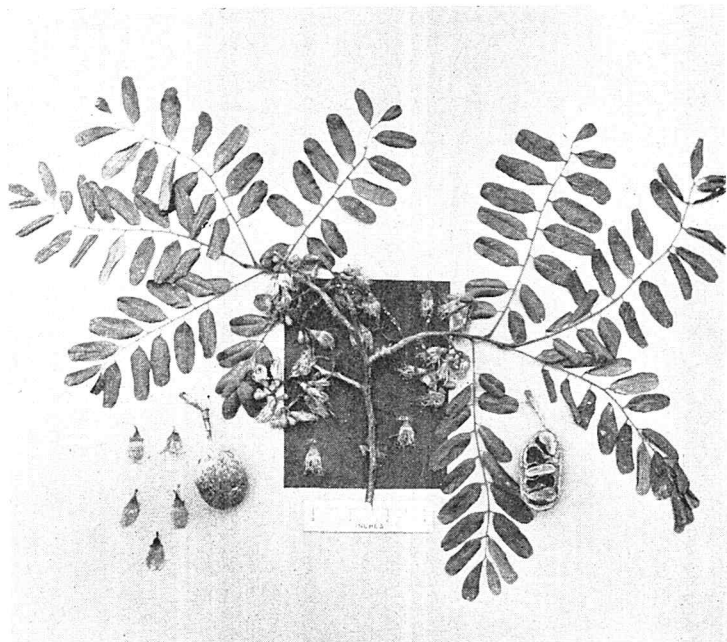
Uses.—As this tree is of scattered occurrence and grows usually in areas which are not readily accessible it is not exploited in this Colony. The heartwood is of a brownish colour and hard. It is sometimes cut up elsewhere into parquet flooring blocks and may also be used for building purposes. The fruits are eaten by natives and are a favourite food of elephants.



Cordyla africana
Habit photo of tree in full flower
[Photo by N. C. Chase.]



Cordyla africana
Leaves and flowers
[Photo by A. A. Pardy.]



Cordyla africana
Leaves, flowers and fruits

[Photo by A. A. Pardy.]