

*duplicates*

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# **Notes on Indigenous Trees and Shrubs of Southern Rhodesia**

## **Acacia nigrescens Oliv. (Mimosaceae)**

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**Acacia nigrescens Oliv.**  
(Mimosaceae)

*Common Name.*—Knobthorn. *Native Names.*—Mkaai, katogwa, katopa, mukotonga (Chis.); unkaya, umkayamhlope (Sind.).

*General Description.*—This common deciduous tree of lower elevations derives its common name from the prominent thorn-tipped knobs on the stems and branches. It grows to a height of about 50 feet with stem diameters up to about 18 inches. On the twigs are pairs of recurved thorns. Leaves are alternate and each leaf is divided into three pairs of pinnae on each of which are two somewhat oval-shaped leaflets about  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch long with oblique bases. These leaflets are very much fewer in number and larger than the leaflets of most acacias. The showy flowers of a creamy colour are in spikes and appear just before, or along with, the new leaves, mainly during September. The thin dark brown pods are flat and pointed. They are 3-5 inches in length and about  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch wide and each contains several flat, round seeds. The bark is fairly rough and of a dark brown colour.

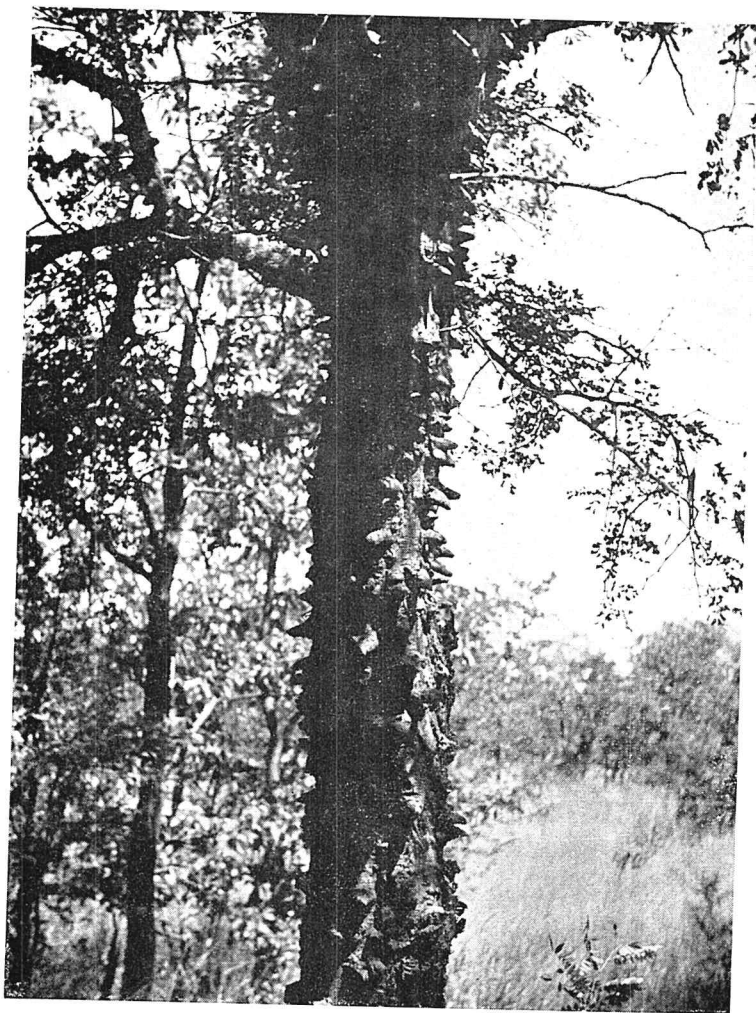
*Distribution.*—The knobthorn is found usually in dry situations, frequently growing gregariously, at lower elevations and often in association with mopani and baobab. It is, for example, conspicuous in the vicinity of the Victoria Falls and lower Sabi Valley when in full flower during September. It occurs in all adjoining territories.

*Uses.*—The wood of this tree is strong and very hard, the heartwood being of a dark-brown colour and very durable. It dries very slowly. Its air-dry weight is about 70 lbs. per cubic foot. It is hard to work and readily blunts saws and tools, but can be worked to a fine finish. On account of its durability it is suitable for sleepers, mine props and fence posts. It makes a good parquet flooring block, and although it can make attractive furniture it is not really suitable for this purpose on account of its hardness and heaviness.



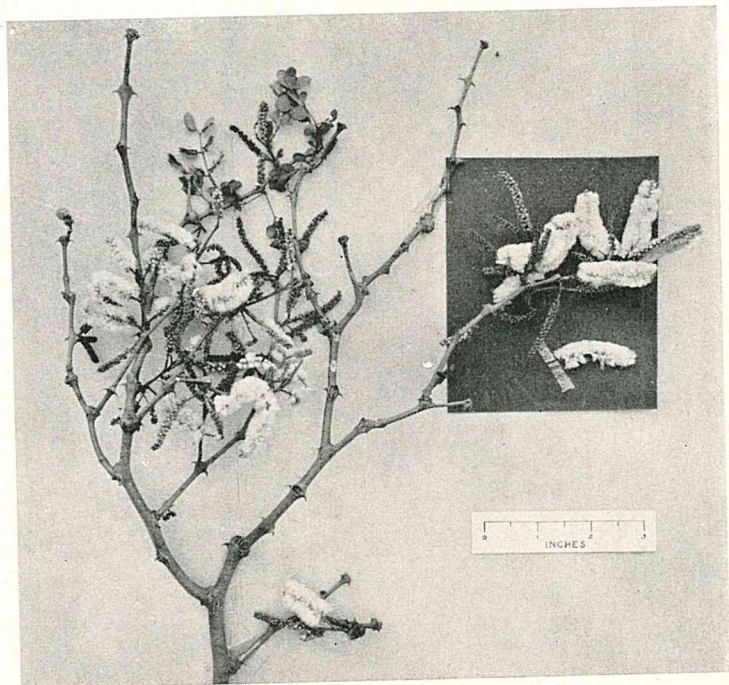
*Acacia nigrescens.*  
Habit photo.

[Photo by P. Banks.]

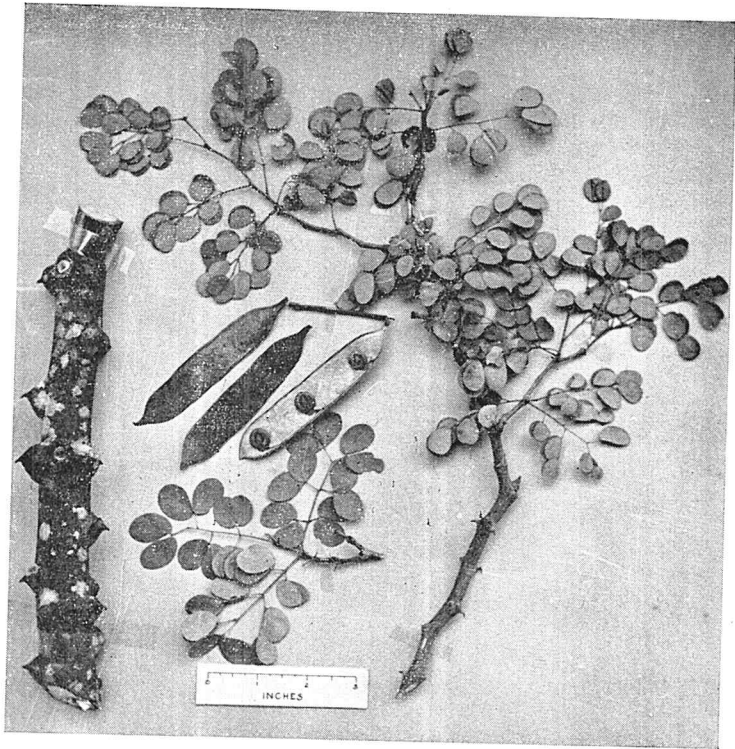


*Acacia nigrescens.*  
Stem showing knobs.

[Photo by P. Banks.]



*Acacia nigrescens.*  
Flowers and young leaves.  
[Photo by A. A. Pardy.]



*Acacia nigrescens.*  
Twigs, leaves and pods.

[Photo by A. A. Pardy.]