

(Reprinted from "Rhodesia Agricultural Journal.")

Vol. 51, No. 5

September-October, 1954

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ISSUED BY AUTHORITY OF

**The Minister of Agriculture and Lands**

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# **Notes on Indigenous Trees and Shrubs of S. Rhodesia**

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**Acacia heteracantha** Burch.  
(Mimosaceae)

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By A. A. PARDY, Chief Research Officer, Forestry Commission.

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**Acacia heteracantha** Burch.

(Mimosaceae)

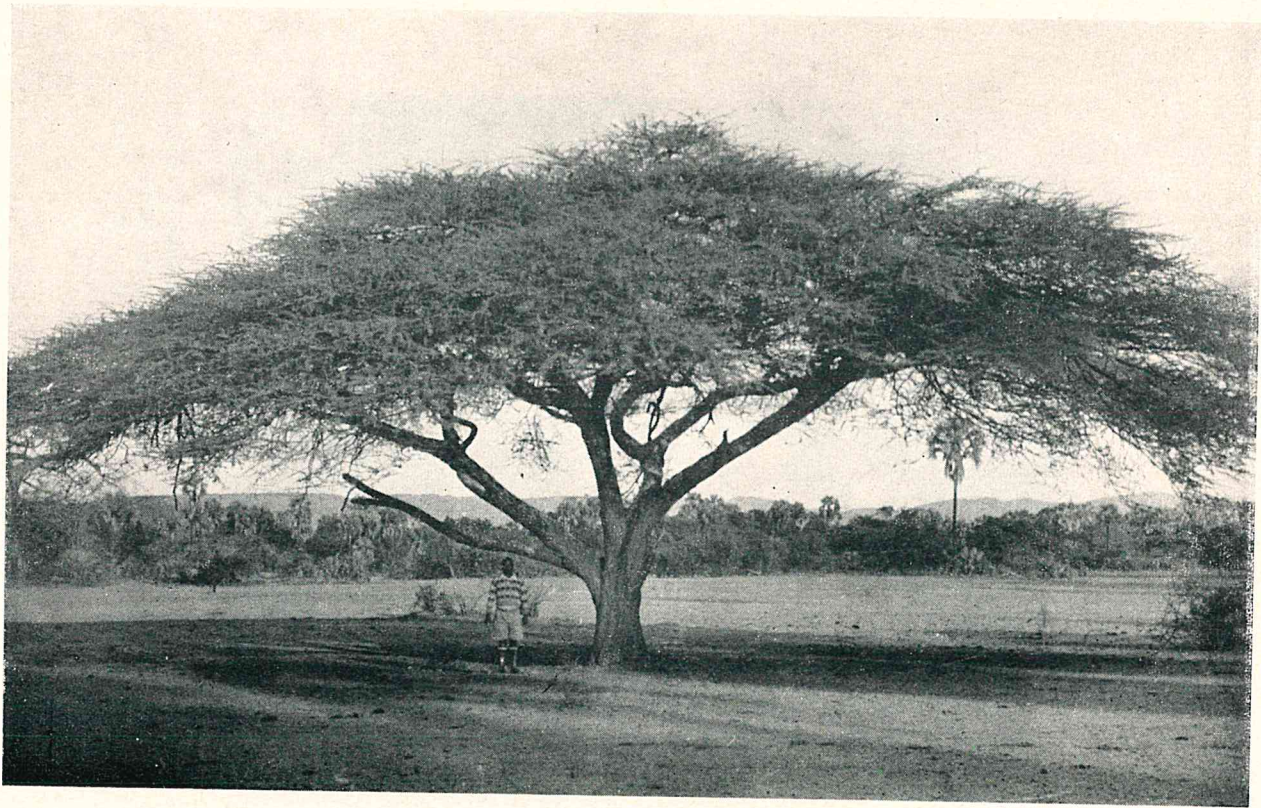
(Synonyms: *Acacia litakunensis* Burch.; *A. spirocarpoides* Engl.; *A. spirocarpa* Hochst ex A. Rich.)

**Common Names:** Umbrella thorn. Haak-en-steek. **Native Names:** Umsasane, umlaladwayi (Sind.).

**General Description:** This is usually a small to medium-sized tree with a roundish to flat-topped crown. It can grow to quite a tall tree on deep, alluvial flats in the lowveld, e.g., in the Kazangula area and along part of the Lutope River in the Sebungwe District. Twigs and young leaves are hairy. Both short, recurved paired spines and long, white, straight, slender paired spines occur. Sometimes one spine is straight and the other recurved. Leaves are small and the numerous leaflets are minute. The flowers, which are produced between November and January, are in the form of small white pom-poms. The pods are small, very much twisted, and often coiled. The light brown ripe pods rattle when shaken. The bark is dark brown.

**Distribution:** The umbrella thorn is common in the hotter, drier parts of the Colony. It also occurs in adjoining territories, and in Bechuanaland is said to be probably the commonest *Acacia*.

**Uses:** The wood is little used except for firewood. The pods are eaten by game animals and cattle.



*Acacia heteracantha*  
Habit photo  
Note Vegetable Ivory Palms in the distance

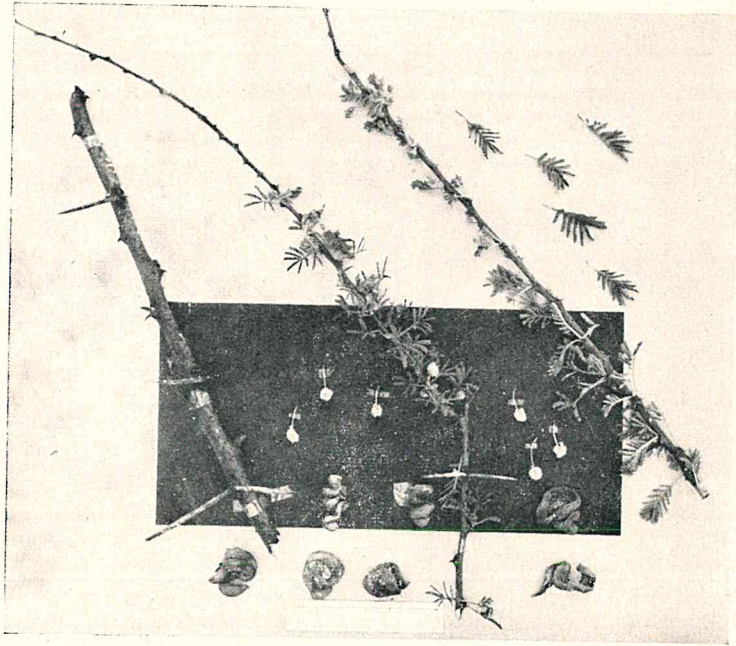
[Photo by R. M. Davies



*Acacia heteracantha*

Habit photo of a well-grown tree in a belt of almost pure  
*Acacia heteracantha* along part of the Lutope River

[Photo by B. Goldsmith



*Acacia heteracantha*

Twigs, showing both straight and recurved thorns, leaves, flowers  
and pods

[Photo by A. A. Pardy