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

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**Bersama abyssinica** Fresen. sub-sp.  
**paullinioides** (Planch.) Verdcourt  
(Melianthaceae)

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

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**Bersama abyssinica** Fresen. sub-sp.  
**paullinioides** (Planch.) Verdcourt  
(Melianthaceae)

**Common Name.**—Bitter bark. **Native Names.**—Chereke, munyahlawwa, munyahava, munyakowa, munyakawa.

**General Description.**—This is an evergreen, umbrageous tree attaining to a height of about 25 feet in the more or less open conditions where it is usually found. The dark green, alternate, shiny, imparipinnate leaves are up to 10 inches in length or even slightly longer. The rachis, or extension of the leaf-stalk with the leaflets, is characteristically winged, especially at the distal end. Each leaf has up to 8 pairs of opposite leaflets and an odd leaflet at the end. Each leaflet is of an elliptical shape with a pointed apex and is practically stalkless. Midribs are prominent on the lower surfaces. The white flowers, to be seen about December, are in dense, long-stalked erect racemes, reminiscent of the inflorescences of the Horse Chestnut. The fruit is a round, thick-walled capsule about an inch in diameter which opens towards the end of the dry season. Each fruit contains 3-5 small reddish seeds each having a yellow aril.

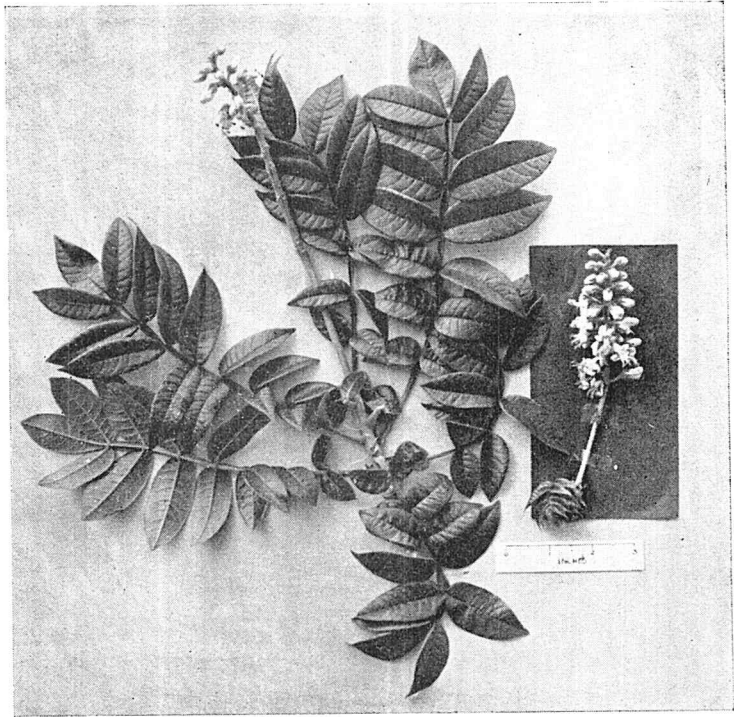
**Distribution.**—This tree is confined to the Eastern Districts and is common, for example, in the vicinity of Chipinga. It also occurs in territories adjoining the Eastern Districts.

**Uses.**—No special uses are known. It can be raised fairly easily from seed and makes a very attractive ornamental tree.



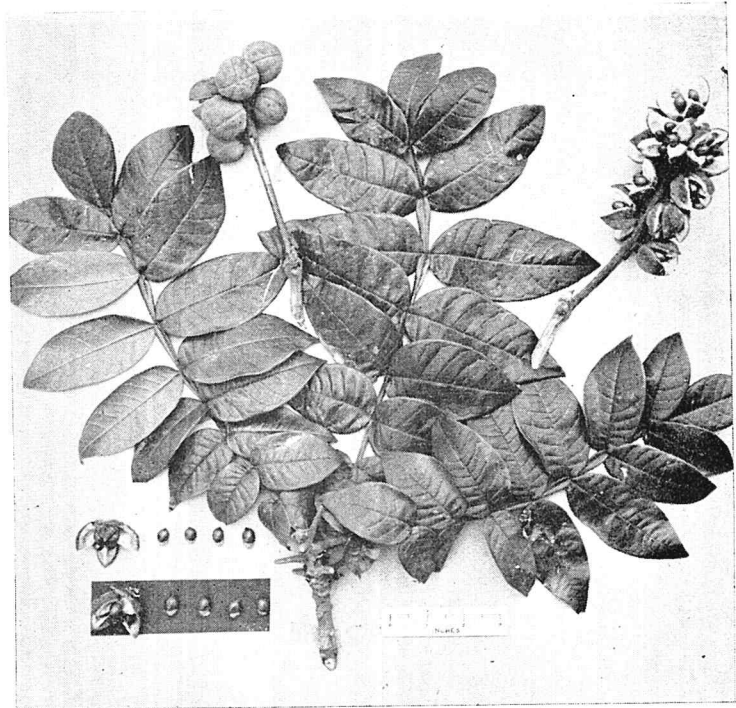
*Bersama abyssinica* sub-sp. *paullinioides*.  
Habit photo.

[Photo by K. Palgrave



*Bersama abyssinica* sub-sp. *paullinioides*.  
Leaves and flowers.

[Photo by A. A. Pardy]



*Bersama abyssinica* sub-sp. *paullinioides*.  
Leaves, fruits and seeds.

[Photo by A. A. Pardy]