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Notes on Indigenous Trees and Shrubs of S. Rhodesia

Adina microcephala Hiern
Rubiaceae

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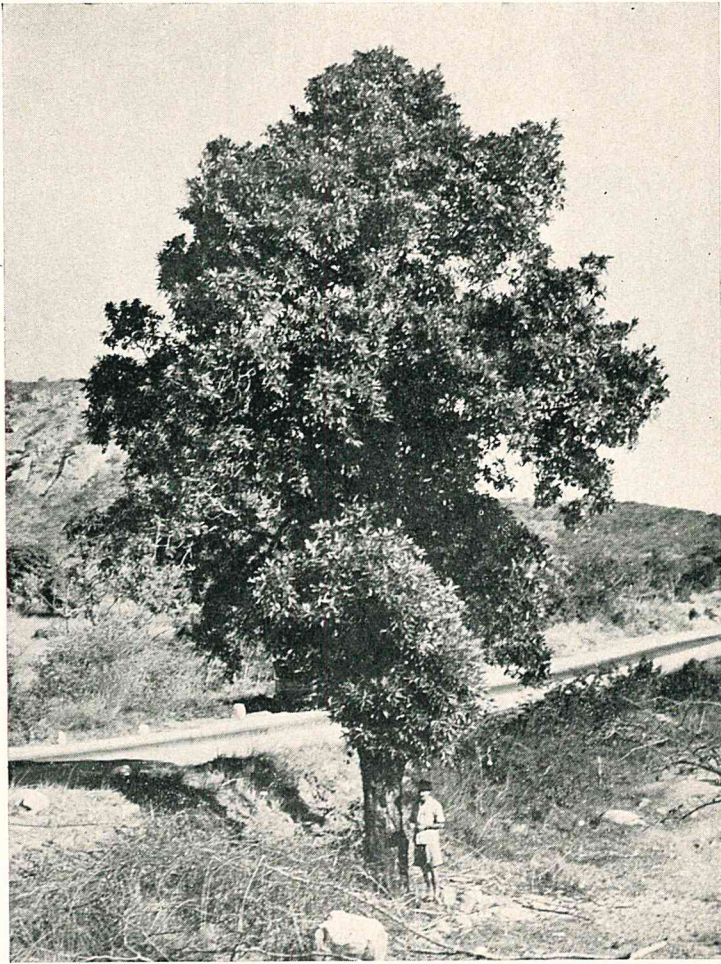
Adina microcephala Hiern
Rubiaceae

Common Name.—Muonya. **Native Names.**—Muonya, muwana, muwona (Chis.).

General Description.—This is an evergreen tree up to about 70 feet in height and having breast height diameters of 3 feet or more. The leaves are simple and in whorls of four and sometimes five. They are crowded at the ends of thick branchlets. Pointed intrapetiolar stipules about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch long are present. These, when of a brown colour and dry, come off more or less as a ring. The petiole of the leaf is about $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch long and is slightly winged. The blade of the leaf, which is up to 8 inches in length, is of a long, narrow, oval shape tapered at both ends. It is dark green above and paler green below, both surfaces being hairless. The mid-rib is prominent on the lower surface. The flowers, which are to be seen from late December to early March, are in compact, globose whitish-brown heads about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in diameter. The individual flowers are small. There are conspicuous bracts on the peduncle or stalk of the flower head. These cover the small, young flower heads. When ripe the flower head disintegrates and small, winged seeds are released from small capsules. The bark is rough and of a brown colour.

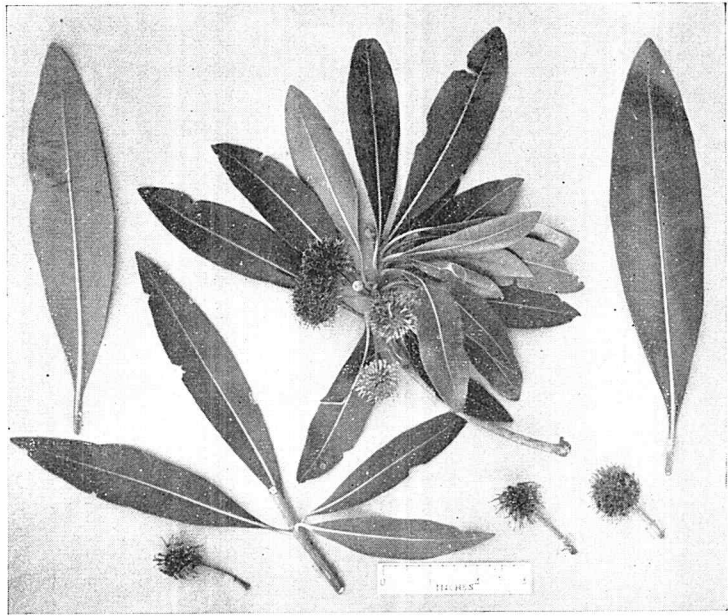
Distribution.—The muonya is confined to the sides of rivers and streams mainly in the lower altitude areas of the Eastern Border. It may be seen, for example, near the main Melsetter Road not far from Umtali and at the edge of the Umvumvumu River. It occurs in adjoining territories.

Uses.—This tree produces a valuable durable, termite resistant timber having an air dry weight of about 58lbs. per cubic foot. It saws easily in spite of its hardness. It seasons well, but should be seasoned slowly. It planes readily and well, but as the wood is somewhat greasy, hand planing tools tend to slip. It does not take glue well. The texture is even and fine. The heartwood is of a yellowish to brownish black colour often with black markings. It has an oily smell. It is used for guide blocks and machine bearings, waggons, railway sleepers, fence posts and parquet flooring blocks. It makes a good flooring block, but is difficult to polish. It is rather heavy for furniture, but can be attractive for the purpose when selected pieces are used. The roots are said to be used medicinally by Natives.



Adina microcephala.

Habit photo of a tree near Umtali at the side of the Melsetter road.



Adina microcephala.
Leaves and flowers.

[Photo. by A. A. Pardy.]