
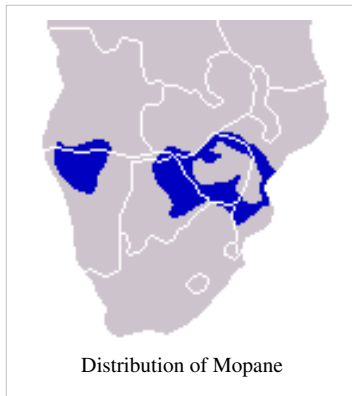


Mopane

For other uses, see Mopane (disambiguation) and Mopani (disambiguation).

Mopane	
	
Scientific classification	
Kingdom:	Plantae
(unranked):	Angiosperms
(unranked):	Eudicots
(unranked):	Rosids
Order:	Fabales
Family:	Fabaceae
Subfamily:	Caesalpinioideae
Tribe:	Detarieae
Genus:	<i>Colophospermum</i> Kirk ex J.Léonard
Species:	<i>C. mopane</i>
Binomial name	
<i>Colophospermum mopane</i> (Kirk ex Benth.) Kirk ex J.Léonard	

Colophospermum mopane, commonly called **mopane**, **mopani**, Wikipedia:Citation needed **balsam tree**, **butterfly tree**, or **turpentine tree**, is a tree in the legume family (Fabaceae), that grows in hot, dry, low-lying areas, 200 to 1,150 metres (660 to 3,770 ft) in elevation, in the far northern parts of southern Africa, into South Africa, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Botswana, Zambia, Namibia, Angola and Malawi. The tree only occurs in Africa and is the only species in genus *Colophospermum*. The species name *mopane* is taken from the local name for the tree.



Distribution of Mopane

It is found growing in alkaline (high lime content) soils which are shallow and not well drained. It also grows in alluvial soils (soil deposited by rivers). In small portions of South Africa and larger adjacent areas of Botswana and Zimbabwe, the trees tend to vary between 4 and 18 m (13 and 59 ft), often called "mopane scrub" (shrub) but also sometimes taller and forming woodland, where further north the trees are taller and form tall woodlands referred to as cathedral mopane. This tree does not grow well outside hot, frost-free areas with summer rainfall.

Its distinctive butterfly-shaped (bifoliate) leaf and thin seed pod make it easy to identify. For human use it is, together with camel thorn and leadwood, one of the three regionally important firewood trees. The name *Colophospermum* is Greek for "oily seed", in reference to the resinous seeds. The part of the name, *colophos*, apparently refers to the strong turpentine smell of the resin. Colophon was the birthplace of Homer in Ionia, and was famous for its rosin, a substance obtained from turpentine or the gummy exudate of some trees.

Uses

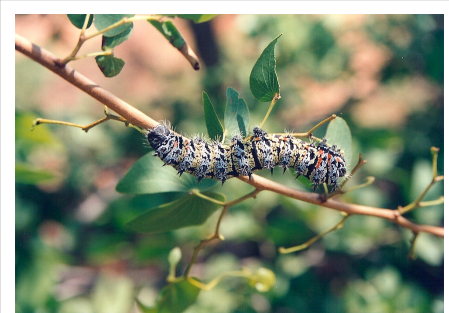
Mopane wood is one of southern Africa's heaviest and is difficult to work because of its hardness.^[1] However, this also makes it termite resistant. For this reason it has long been used for building houses and fences, as railway sleepers and as pit props. The termite-resistance and rich, reddish colouring also make it popular for flooring. Outside Africa, mopane is gaining popularity as a heavy, decorative wood, its uses including aquarium ornaments, bases for lamps or sculptures, and garden accents.

It is also increasingly being used in the construction of musical instruments, particularly woodwind. Suitable quality African blackwood (*Dalbergia melanoxylon*), traditionally used for clarinets, is becoming harder to find. Mopane is fairly oily, seasons very well with few splits or shakes, and produces instruments of a warm, rich tone.^[2]

Mopane twigs have been traditionally used as tooth brushes, bark to make twine and for tanning, and leaves for healing wounds. The wood is also used to make charcoal and for braai wood.

The tree is a major food source for the mopane worm, the caterpillar of the moth *Imbrasia belina*. The caterpillars are rich in protein and are eaten by people. The tree also acts as a foodplant for a wild silk moth, *Gonometa rufobrunnea*. Cocoons of the moth are harvested as wild silk, to make cloth.

The mopane tree also serves as a host plant for the mopane psyllid *Retroacizzia mopani*.^{[3][4]}



Branch of a Mopane tree, with a mopane worm (*Gonimbrasia belina*) on it. Immediately below the caterpillar, a pair of distinctive, butterfly-shaped leaves have survived.

References

- [1] The Wood Database (<http://www.wood-database.com/lumber-identification/hardwoods/mopane/>) Mopane. Retrieved 24 June 2013.
- [2] Prosono International (<http://www.prosono.co.za/en/woods-for-woodwinds.shtml>) Woods for woodwinds. Retrieved 23 April 2010.
- [3] Oppong, C.K., Addo-Bediako, A., Potgieter, M.J. & Wessels, D.C.J. 2009. Distribution of the eggs of the mopane psyllid *Retrocizzia mopani* (Hemiptera: Psyllidae) on the mopane tree. *African Invertebrates* **50** (1): 185-190. (http://www.africaninvertebrates.org.za/Oppong_etal_2009_50_1_430.aspx)
- [4] Oppong, C.K., Addo-Bediako, A., Potgieter, M.J. & Wessels, D.C.J. 2010. Nymphal behaviour and lerp construction in the mopane psyllid *Retrocizzia mopani* (Hemiptera: Psyllidae). *African Invertebrates* **51** (1): 201-205. (http://www.africaninvertebrates.org.za/Oppong_etal_2010_51_1_467.aspx)
- Esterhuysen, N., Von Breitenbach, J. & Söhnge, H. 2001. *Remarkable trees of South Africa*. Briza Publications, Pretoria.
 - Ferwerda, J.G. (http://www.itc.nl/library/Papers_2005/phd/ferwerda.pdf) (2005) Charting the quality of forage: measuring and mapping the variation of chemical components in foliage with hyperspectral remote sensing. Wageningen, Wageningen University, 2005. ITC Dissertation 126, 166 p. ISBN 90-8504-209-7.
-

Article Sources and Contributors

Mopane *Source:* <http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?oldid=624002572> *Contributors:* Black Falcon, Deflyer, DePiep, EncycloPetey, Epp, Gaius Cornelius, Gdr, Glendoremus, Gwue, Hsuepfl, Hydro, IceCreamAntisocial, JMK, JackyR, Jaguarlaser, Jelle76, John Hill, JonHarder, Keegan, MPF, Magioladitis, Maherto, McTrixie, Metsavend, Mukogodo, Nadiatalent, Nightsturm, Nono64, Nvciprian, Paul venter, Pekinensis, Plantdrew, Rcsprinter123, Ricardo Carneiro Pires, Rjk1, Rkitko, Roke, Rui Gabriel Correia, Seabifar, ShelfSkewed, Sminthopsis84, Stan Shebs, Stfg, Vijeth, 36 anonymous edits

Image Sources, Licenses and Contributors

File:Mopane.JPG *Source:* <http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:Mopane.JPG> *License:* Public Domain *Contributors:* Teo Gómez

File:Mopane-Distribution-small.png *Source:* <http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:Mopane-Distribution-small.png> *License:* GNU Free Documentation License *Contributors:* Bff, En rouge, Hsuepfl

File:Mopane worm on mopane tree.jpg *Source:* http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:Mopane_worm_on_mopane_tree.jpg *License:* Creative Commons Attribution 2.5 *Contributors:* JackyR

License

Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0
[//creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/)
