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Grewia bicolor

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Grewia bicolor Juss.

Family: Malvaceae

Common names: white raisin (Eng.); witosyntjie (Afr.); umsiphane (Swazi); nsihana, guguna, nsihani (Tsonga); mogwane (Tswana); murabva (Venda); umlalampunzi, imdliwampunzi (Zulu).

SA Tree No: 458

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The bicoloured-leaved *Grewia bicolor* has beautiful, bright yellow flowers. It is a frost-resistant, hardy shrub or small tree that is adaptable to all soils, from clay to sand, and does not require much water.



Description

Grewia bicolor is a multi-stemmed shrub or small tree, up to 9 m high. Its bark is smooth, grey, becoming dark grey and deeply fissured and peeling away in straps with age. The young branchlets are velvety grey or brown.

The leaves are alternate, simple and elliptic to slightly ovate, 15-80 x 10-32 mm, with a broadly tapering to rounded apex. They are 3-veined from the asymmetrically lobed base, rounded to slightly cordate, held horizontally or drooping, glabrous above, almost white and silvery hairy below, while the margins are entire to slightly serrated. The petiole (leaf stalk) is about 1-8 mm long.



The flowers are small, bright yellow, borne in axillary clusters at the end of branches. They are often borne in profusion with sepals up to 12 mm long and petals shorter. The flowering time is October-March.



The fruits are round and fleshy drupes (fruits such as plums), reddish brown or orange and black when ripe, entire or deeply 2-lobed, up to 6 mm in diameter.



Conservation Status

According to Raimondo et al. (2009), *Grewia bicolor* was of Least Concern (LC), when it was evaluated against the five IUCN criteria, as it does not qualify for the categories Critically Endangered, Endangered, Vulnerable or Near Threatened.

Distribution and habitat

Grewia bicolor naturally occurs in dry deciduous woodland and bushveld. It is frequently associated with mopane at low altitudes, on sandy flats and rocky mountain slopes. It is also occasionally found at medium altitudes in higher-rainfall areas. It is widespread, from northern KwaZulu-Natal to West Africa, Ethiopia and Angola, also the Middle East and India.

Derivation of name and historical aspects

The genus *Grewia* was named after Nehemiah Grew (1641-1712), an English physician. The specific name *bicolor* refers to the bicoloured leaves.

Ecology

The white raisin is often associated with termite mounds and riverine fringes, especially at medium altitudes in higher rainfall areas.

Uses

The bark of this *Grewia* is used for fibre, and the wood for axe handles and sticks. The leaves are browsed by game and livestock. The fruit is edible, sweetish but astringent. The roots are also used to treat chest complaints.

Growing *Grewia bicolor*

Grewia bicolor is a most variable species, probably because it freely hybridises with *G. monticola* to produce a fertile hybrid under the name *G. subspathulata*. These trees grow best in temperate climates with summer rainfall. They do not require much water and are frost-hardy. *Grewia bicolor* forms a distinct shrub layer below the tree canopy.

References

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Mothogoane M.S.

National Herbarium, Pretoria

September 2012

Plant Attributes:**Plant Type:** Tree**SA Distribution:** Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, North West**Soil type:** Sandy**Flowering season:** Early Summer, Late Summer**PH:** Neutral**Flower colour:** Yellow**Aspect:** Shade, Morning Sun (Semi Shade), Afternoon Sun (Semi Shade)**Gardening skill:** Average**Special Features:**

Attracts birds



Drought resistant



Hedge/screen



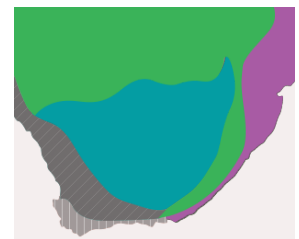
Edible plant



Medical plant



Useful plant

Horticultural zones**Zone 1** Coastal summer rainfall, frost free**Zone 4** Summer rainfall

Karoo and Highveld, Frost in winter

Zone 5 Bushveld summer rainfall, Light frost

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