

TREE OF THE MONTH – APRIL

National Tree List Number - 539

Combretum imberbe: Leadwood (Eng), Hardekool (Afr), Umbondwe omnyama (IsiZulu).

Description

The magnificent Leadwood is a medium to large, semi-deciduous tree, which grows up to 20 m in height. *Combretum imberbe* is the tallest of all the South African combretums.

Dead branches and shoots often remain on a matured tree. The colour of the trunk is pale grey to white. The leathery leaves are arranged opposite each other. The flowers are yellowish cream-coloured and have a sweet fragrance

The leadwood produces 4-winged fruit, which are yellowish green and turn pale red when mature from February to June. The wood has a thin yellowish sapwood and a dark brown, hard, very heavy heartwood. The bark is pale-grey, cracked into rectangular blocks along deep longitudinal furrows and irregular transverse cracks.

Habitat

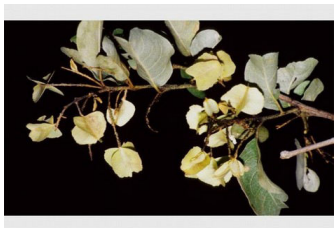
The leadwood can be found in all the bushveld regions and in mixed forest in southern Africa . It is widespread in Lowveld areas and grows along streams and rivers. Common on alluvial soils.

Flowering: From November to March

Fruiting: From February to August

Ecology

The leaves are eaten by kudu, impala, grey duiker, elephant, giraffe and the last two eat the branches as well. It is also a good tree for birds to nest in. The presence of leadwood in some areas can indicate that the grazing is good. The Leadwood tree is regarded as an indicator of good grazing areas and sweet veld.



THE LEADWOOD TREE IS PROTECTED IN SA