

TREE OF THE MONTH – MAY 2017

National Tree List Number - 360

Sclerocarya birrea: Marula (Eng), Maroela (Afr), Umganu (IsiZulu), Nkanyi (Shangaan) (*sklērós*, "hard", and *káryon*, "nut")

Description: It is single-stemmed with a dense, spreading crown and deciduous foliage. The adult tree is characterized by a grey mottled bark. The tree grows up to 18 m tall mostly in low altitudes and open woodlands. Fascinatingly enough, only the female trees bears fruits, while the male tree displays flowers. Leaves are unevenly compound with 7 – 13 pairs of leaflets plus a terminal one, crowded near the ends of the branches.

Habitat: Regarded as a sacred tree in Africa. It is widely distributed from 20°N to 30°S, and is found in 29 countries. Grows in various types of woodland on sand to sandy loam.

Flowering: It bears inconspicuous red and yellow flowers from September to November

Fruiting: From December to March

Fruit



Leaves



Flower



MARULA TREE

Ecology: A beautiful, leafy tree that is both drought resistant and yields exceptional fruit per tree, *The Marula Tree* is highly prized in Africa. The fruits, have a light yellow skin, with white flesh that is rich in vitamin C— containing about eight times the amount found in an orange. They are succulent and tart with a strong and distinctive flavour. Inside is a walnut-sized, thick-walled stone. The fruit is used to make jams and jellies, Liqueurs (eg. Amarula), Marula Mampoe, sold as a frozen puree, and marula oil is used as an ingredient in cosmetics.

All parts of the tree are nutritious and are utilised by a wide variety of wildlife from elephants, Giraffe, monkeys, down to moths and butterflies. Even the Meyers parrot likes to have a go at the hard nut.

Interesting Note: In 2015, Amarula was 7th in the top ten liqueurs sold worldwide.



Bark



Leaves

THE MARULA TREE IS PROTECTED IN SA