

Entandrophragma C.DC.

Classification: Eudicots, Order Sapindales, Family Meliaceae, the Mahogany Family

A genus of 11 species in tropical Africa. Most are emergents of evergreen or deciduous forests, typically with cylindrical boles unbranched to a considerable height. Leaves pinnate; leaflets opposite, entire. Flowers borne on panicles on the new growth. Stamens completely or partly fused to form a staminal tube. Fruit a large woody dehiscent capsule, the five valves separating in various ways to release the winged seeds. Three species in Zambia, including some of our tallest trees.

Entandrophragma caudatum (Sprague) Sprague

Type from Transvaal, South Africa.

Global distribution

Southern Zambia and Malawi, to Mozambique, Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal, Zimbabwe and Botswana.

Zambian distribution

E: between Yakobe and Mpelembe, Luangwa Valley, fr. viii.1938, *Greenway & Trapnell* 5639 (FHO); **S:** Gwembe Valley, near Sinazongwe, fl. ix.1955, *Bainbridge* 126 (FHO; K);

W: Sesheke, Katongo Forest Reserve, fr. i.1952, *White* 1977 (FHO; K).

Sightings

C: Chisamba, Sable Farm (David Gordon) S14°55'29" E28°17'12" 1145 m; **S:** Siavonga Distr., Mbendele thicket S16°21'43" E28°43'18" 488 m, large tree in deciduous thicket, fl. 5.x.1975; **W:** Shangombo Distr., Nangweshi.

Common names

mululu (Ila, Lozi, Tonga), mupumena (Lozi), wooden banana (English)

Description

Deciduous tree up to 30 m tall and with bole to 2 m in diameter, without buttresses. Bark flaking in large irregular scales, leaving buff coloured patches. Capsule cylindrical, pale brown, the valves dehiscing from the tip, the dangling seeds attached by the ends of the wings.

Habitat

Deciduous forest on free-draining sandy soil, and rocky slopes. Mature tree may survive in woodland after the surrounding protective thicket has disappeared. Generally at lower altitudes, below c. 1100 m.

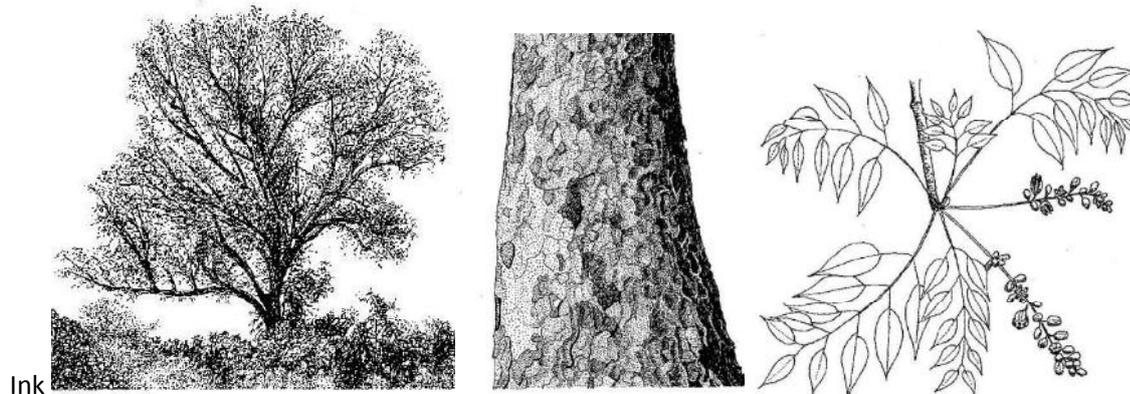
Phenology

The leaves are shed soon after the end of the rains. In more open situations flowering may occur in September, but in the Ngoma Forest in Kafue National Park, I have seen the new foliage appearing as late as mid-December in a normal rainy season.

Conservation status

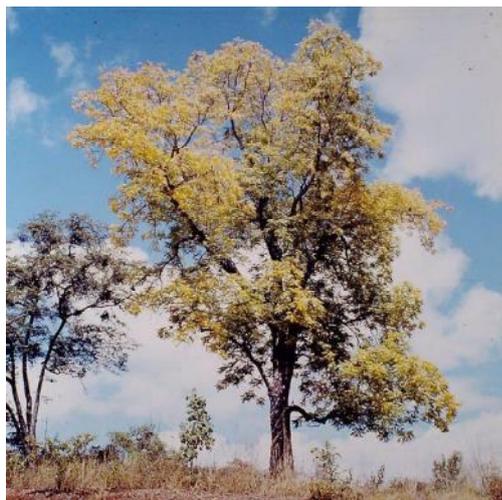
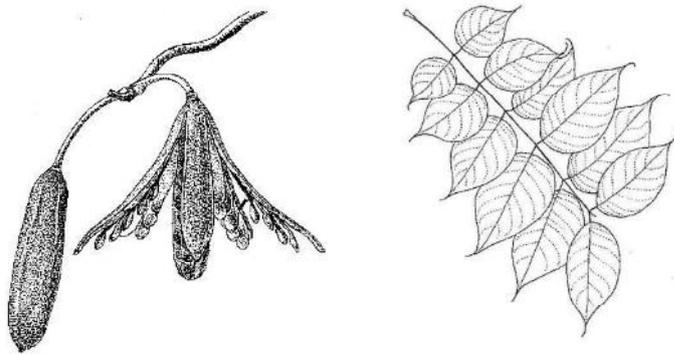
Much of the prime forest habitats have been lost through inundation (Lake Kariba), large and small scale agriculture. The trees growing on rocky terrain are less vulnerable, but don't achieve the size of trees on deep soil.

Ink drawings by Suzanne Carter. Photos by Mike Bingham.

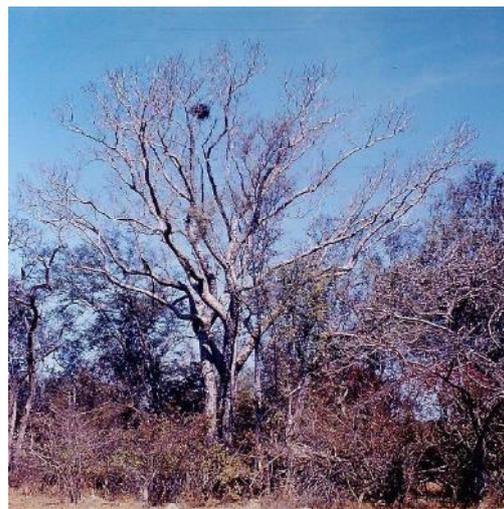


Ink

Entandrophragma caudatum



Leaves turning yellow, Chiawa, 30 March 1975.



In deciduous thicket, Lufupa, 20 July 1974.



The capsule before dehiscence, 10 April 1973.



The dehiscent capsules, Great East Road, near Luangwa Bridge, 7 September 1973.

Entandrophragma delevoiyi De Wild.

Type from D.R.Congo.

Global distribution

Katanga Province of D.R. Congo & Tanzania.

Zambian distribution

Nw: Kabompo Distr., nr. Chifwe R., 10 miles E. of Kabompo Pontoon, immat. fr. 23.xi.1952, *Holmes* 1031; **Cb:** Chichele, Ndola, fl. & fr. ix.1952, *Angus* 374 (BM; BR; FHO; K; MO; ND); **N:** Mbala to Tunduma, km. 37, fr. viii.1949, *Greenway* 8376 (FHO; PRE); Mbesuma, fr. 17.iii.1961, *Astle* 865; Mbesuma Ranch, "mululu", fl. 24.x.1961, *Astle* 999; **C:** 8 km. W. of Chanobi Concession near Mumbwa, fr. ix.1947, *Brenan & Greenway* 7863 (FHO; K); **S:** Namwala Distr., N. of Katinti firebreak, 15°35'S. 25°38'E., buds 4.x.1967, *S.Yamba* Y/1; Namwala Distr., Kafue Nat. Park, Lubanga Forest, E. of cordon road, on Vaughan's loop road, betw. Ngoma Camp & the Musa nr. Sacred Tree, 1525D4, 75' tree, ?date, *Bainbridge* 952.

Sightings

C: Kabwe, Lukanga Farm S14°26'20" E28°19'25"; Mumbwa Distr., Lutale S15°08' E26°52' fl. 17.x.1988, *Bingham* 5040 & 5041; Lusaka-Mumbwa 101 km; Big Concession, Amatheon Project S14°40' E26°58'.

Common names

mofu, mofwe (Lunda, Kaonde, Bemba)

Description

Semi-evergreen tree up to 35 m tall, the crown emerging above the surrounding forest; without or with slight buttresses at the base. Capsule dark brown, cylindrical, the valves dehiscent from the base of the capsule; seed attached to the valve by cottony threads, the wing free.

Habitat

Dry evergreen forest, especially on lake basin soils.

Uses

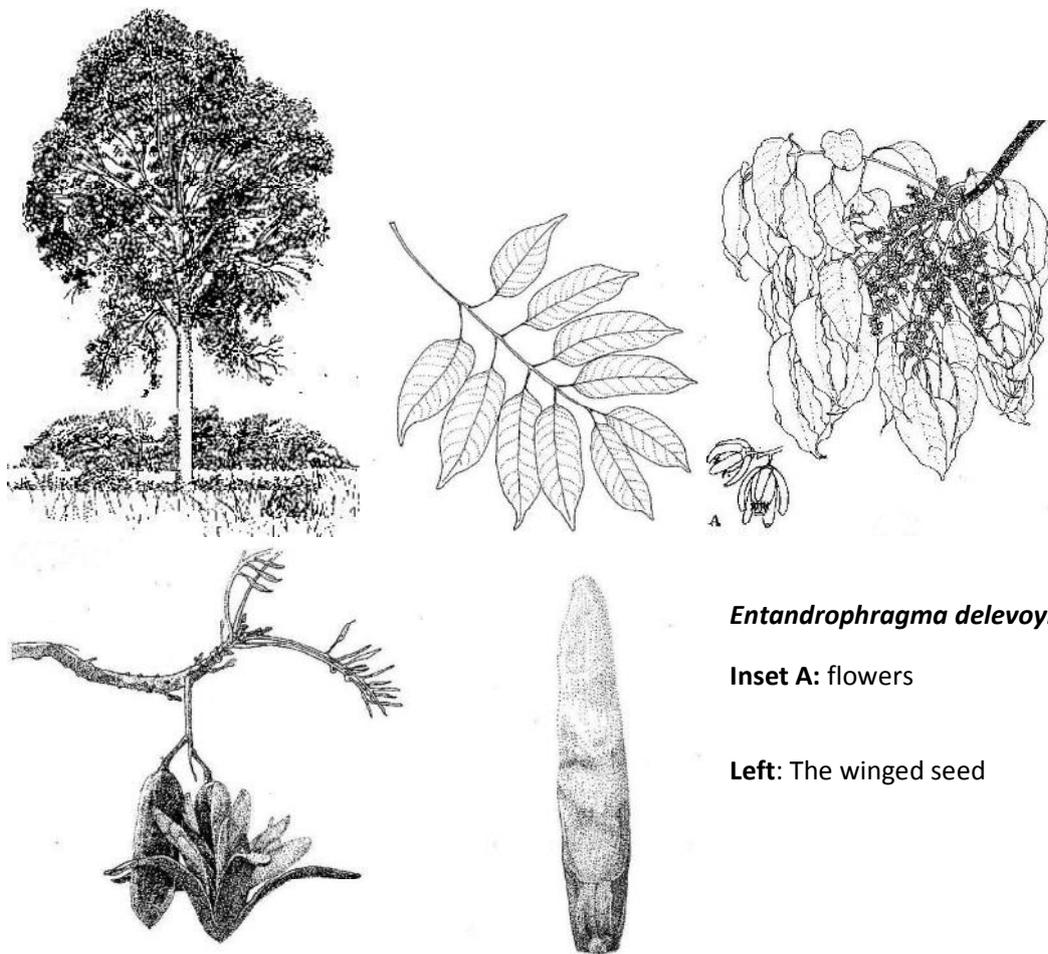
The tree, never more than occasional, is too sparsely distributed to support a commercially viable timber prospect, and the wood tends to shatter when the cut tree falls. This has not deterred determined loggers, who will fell a tree and then abandon it when the wood is found to be unusable.

Cultivation

In common with other mahoganies, attempts to grow the tree in plantations have failed chiefly resulting from the depredations of the caterpillar of the Mahogany Shoot-borer (*Hypsipyla* sp.). Trees planted individually, in small groups or avenues generally survive, for example, a number of trees in Lusaka's Ridgeway suburb, at the Lusaka Sports Club tennis courts, and along Ng'umbo Road, planted in the 1950s.

Conservation status

Much of the dry-evergreen forest habitat has been destroyed and replaced by fire supporting woodland or scrub.



Entandrophragma delevoiyi

Inset A: flowers

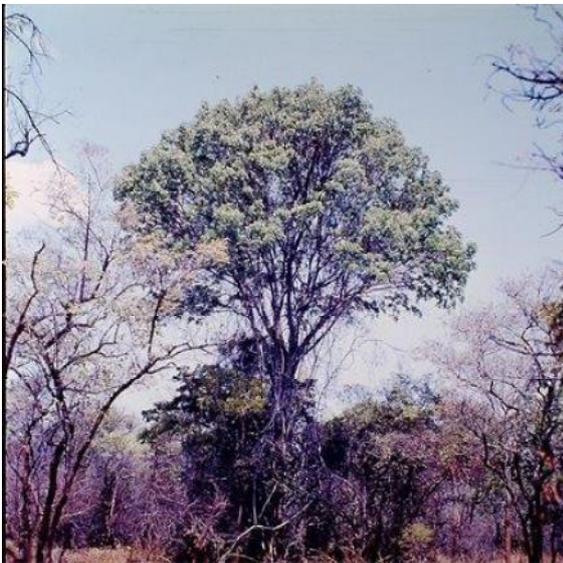
Left: The winged seed



The famous national monument tree on the Ndola-Kitwe highway in November 1972. The tree fell in June 2008. Note that the second lane, which had not been constructed at the time, passed on the opposite side of the tree.



This tree, which had outlived the surrounding thicket in which it began its life, died a few years after this photo was taken. Kapyanga, December 1972.



A young tree in its protecting patch of thicket. Chibenji, 13 June 1972.



The typical long bole.



Young leaves and flowers, Ng'umbo Road, Lusaka, 18 October 1972.



The flowering panicles on the new growth.

Right – The mature capsules with valves dehiscing from the base.



Entandrophragma excelsum (Dawe & Sprague) Sprague

Global distribution

Eastern D.R. Congo, Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi.

Zambian distribution

M: Mafinga Mts., in ravine forest, *Angus* 840 (FHO).

Dowsett-Lemaire records it from five montane forests on the Zambian Nyika.

Description

Large evergreen tree, up to 60 m tall. Bole buttressed to a height of 4 m. Capsule cylindrical, valves dehiscing from the base of the capsule.

Habitat

Montane forest.