

LOCAL NAMES

Afrikaans

(Transvaalboekenhout, rooiboekenhout, witboekenhout, bosveldboekenhout, geelboekenhout); Bemba (saninga); English (beachwood, red boekenhout, beechwood, African beech); Lozi (musokoto); Lunda (musokoto); Ndebele (umdwadwa); Nyanja (chiyele, chinsense); Shona (mutsatsati); Tongan (muhunde)

BOTANIC DESCRIPTION

Faurea saligna is usually a small- to medium-sized, slender, graceful, semi-deciduous tree, 7-10 (max. 20) m in height; stem straight or twisted, sometimes swollen at the base, with a diameter of nearly 60 cm. Bark dark greyish-brown to almost black, rough and deeply fissured longitudinally. A spreading, fairly sparse crown develops with age, young branchlets pendent and conspicuously red.

Leaves leathery, long, pointed, narrow, alternate, simple, 6.5-16 x 1.3-2.5 cm, droop downwards gracefully, sometimes somewhat sickle shaped, shiny, fresh green to yellowish-green, turning red in autumn, young leaves pink to bright rosy red, tapering to the base and apex; margin entire, wavy, slightly curved; petiole up to 2 cm long, pink; main vein red, side veins join up to form a long vein just within the margin. Flowers in slender spikes, 12-15 x 2-3 cm, greenish to creamy white during the flowering stage, mauve or pinkish-white in the fruiting stage, honey scented, stalkless; calyx red and hairy.

Fruit a small nutlet, club shaped, brown, with long silky white or yellow hairs, containing a single spherical, hairy seed and slender, persistent, red styles which appear as woolly pinkish-white spikes.

A 1st field impression is that the tree resembles *Rhus lancea*, but closer inspection reveals the absence of the 3-foliate leaf typical of the latter. The name beechwood arises because the wood resembles that of the European beech.

The generic name, *Faurea*, was given as a tribute to the memory of a young soldier and ardent botanist, W.C. Faure; the specific name, *saligna*, is Latin and means 'willow' or 'willow-like' and refers to the drooping willow-like leaves and catkins.

BIOLOGY

F. saligna is hermaphroditic. In southern Africa, flowering occurs from August to February, depending on rainfall, and fruiting from October to April. During the flowering season, it produces large quantities of nectar foraged by honeybees, which are probably the pollination vectors. In Zambia, flowering occurs between March and August, and the fruit ripens about 6 months later.



Faurea saligna is a slender deciduous tree with an erect trunk, upright shape, usually a narrow crown and drooping foliage. (Botha AD)



The trunk of *Faurea saligna* is erect and the bark dark grey-brown to almost black, rough and vertically grooved. The bark is used for tanning leather. (Botha AD)

ECOLOGY

F. saligna occurs at low-medium altitudes in open woodland and on stony hillsides, sometimes along river banks. In South Africa, its presence is associated with sourveld, turpentine grass and tamboekie grass, and reportedly can withstand moderate burning, but does not survive fierce grass fires. *F. saligna* is a common and graceful tree of the Transvaal bushveld and lowveld, where it grows in clumps or together in large numbers. In Zimbabwe, it is frequent in woodlands on the central watershed and in escarpment woodland. It is widespread in highland savannah in Kenya, particularly around Mt Kenya, and is found in low- to high-altitude forest as far west as Nigeria. This species of early forest successions is common at the edges of the Impenetrable (Bwindi) Forest and of forests on Ruwenzori and Mufumbiro Mountains in Uganda. The typical form of *F. saligna* is found throughout Zambia with the exception of Western Province and Kalombo District; here, it is essentially a woodland tree restricted to miombo, Kalahari, and chipya woodland where it is occasional to locally frequent, especially in plateau miombo. There is another variety of this species with broader, glossier leaves, which is confined to the higher rainfall areas of Zambia and essentially a riparian tree of gallery forest, rarely found in miombo woodland.

BIOPHYSICAL LIMITS

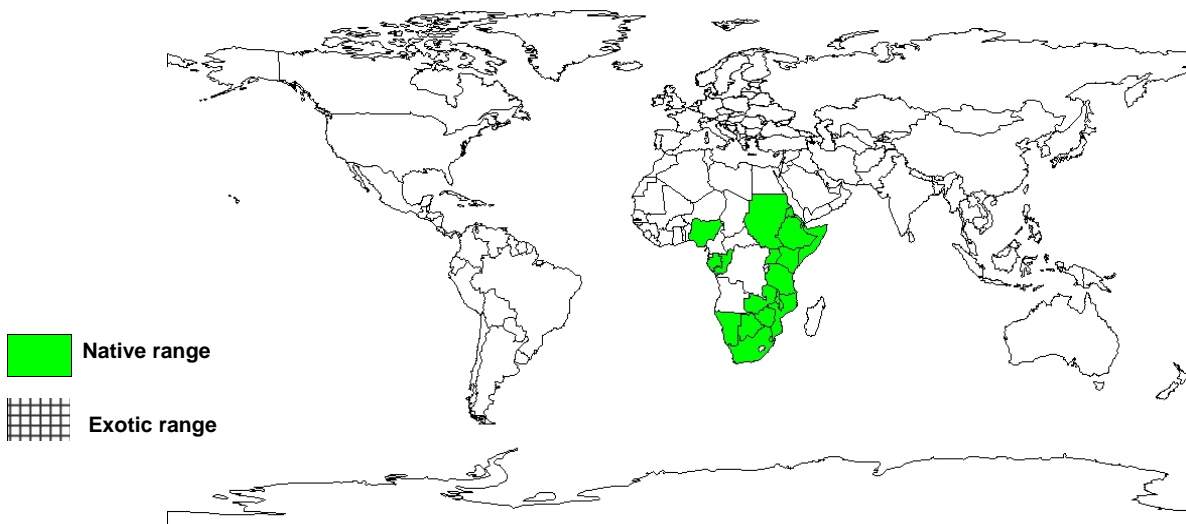
Altitude: 2100-3000 m, Mean annual rainfall: 500 mm

Soil type: It is usually found on sandy or red loam soils and on stony slopes.

DOCUMENTED SPECIES DISTRIBUTION

Native: Botswana, Central African Republic, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Exotic:



The map above shows countries where the species has been planted. It does neither suggest that the species can be planted in every ecological zone within that country, nor that the species can not be planted in other countries than those depicted. Since some tree species are invasive, you need to follow biosafety procedures that apply to your planting site.

PRODUCTS

Apiculture: Flowers produce nectar that is readily collected by honey bees. Honey dark coloured, of high viscosity, granulates slowly and is strongly flavoured. The aroma is rather musty.

Fuel: Wood makes good firewood and charcoal.

Timber: The wood is strong, durable, of medium weight, brittle, and pale yellow, red or dark brown. It is beautifully figured, handsomely coarse grained, polishes well, does not warp or shrink and can be worked green, but suffers from gum pockets (cracks in the wood filled with bright yellow gum). It is easy to work and excellent for furniture, cabinet making, internal construction, joinery, doors, wagons, poles, posts, water wheels, panelling and as general-purpose timber. It is not attacked by borers or termites.

Tannin or dyestuff: A red dye is obtained by soaking the wood in water, and the bark can be used for tanning leather.

Medicine: The bark is boiled in broth and taken as a tonic, while roots are boiled and the liquid drunk as a remedy for diarrhoea and indigestion.

SERVICES

Ornamental: It is an attractive tree, suitable for planting in amenity areas.

Boundary/barrier/support: Trees can be planted as windbreaks.

Intercropping: The species is often left standing in cropland.

TREE MANAGEMENT

Growth rate is medium, and trees can be grown individually or in stands.

GERMPLASM MANAGEMENT

Seeds are perishable and lose viability within a month. There are about 165 000 seeds/kg.

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SUGGESTED CITATION

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