Adansonia digitata *Bombacaceae*

Indigenous

Ar: Tebeldi	*Bl: Dim*	*Eng: Baobab*
Km: Asa	*Nr: Dari*	*Tg: Duma*
Tr: Himeret		

Ecology: A conspicuous and well-known tree in tropical Africa south of the Sahara, growing best in moist and well-drained soils. It is deep rooted, drought hardy and prefers a high watertable, 500-1,700 m. It is more dominant in the western lowlands and also seen, although more rarely, in the Hazemo plains and Mai-habar valley.

Uses: Fuel (dry fruit), carving (utensils, floats, light canoes), **food** (shoots, leaves, seeds), drink (fruit pulp is high in vitamin C), **medicine** (every part: bark, roots), fodder (leaves, shoots, fruits), mulch, ornamental, shade, **fibre** (young bark, roots), tannin (bark), red dye (roots), water containers, dishes (fruit cases), storage (hollow trees).

Description: A deciduous tree with a **thick trunk (diameter to 8 m,** girth to 20 m and height to 25 m). **Bare** for up to 9 months, the stiff bare branches resemble roots. BARK: **Smooth, grey** to 10 cm thick; young spongy wood can hold much water. LEAVES: Seedlings have simple leaves, **mature leaves compound with up to 9 leaflets.** FLOWERS: **Large and white,** opening at night; the unpleasant-smelling nectar attracts pollinating fruit bats. FRUIT: Hairy, **yellow-brown capsules, 15-22 cm, hang on long stalks** on the bare tree. Many seeds in white-pink, dry, edible pulp that contains tartaric acid.

Propagation: Seedlings.

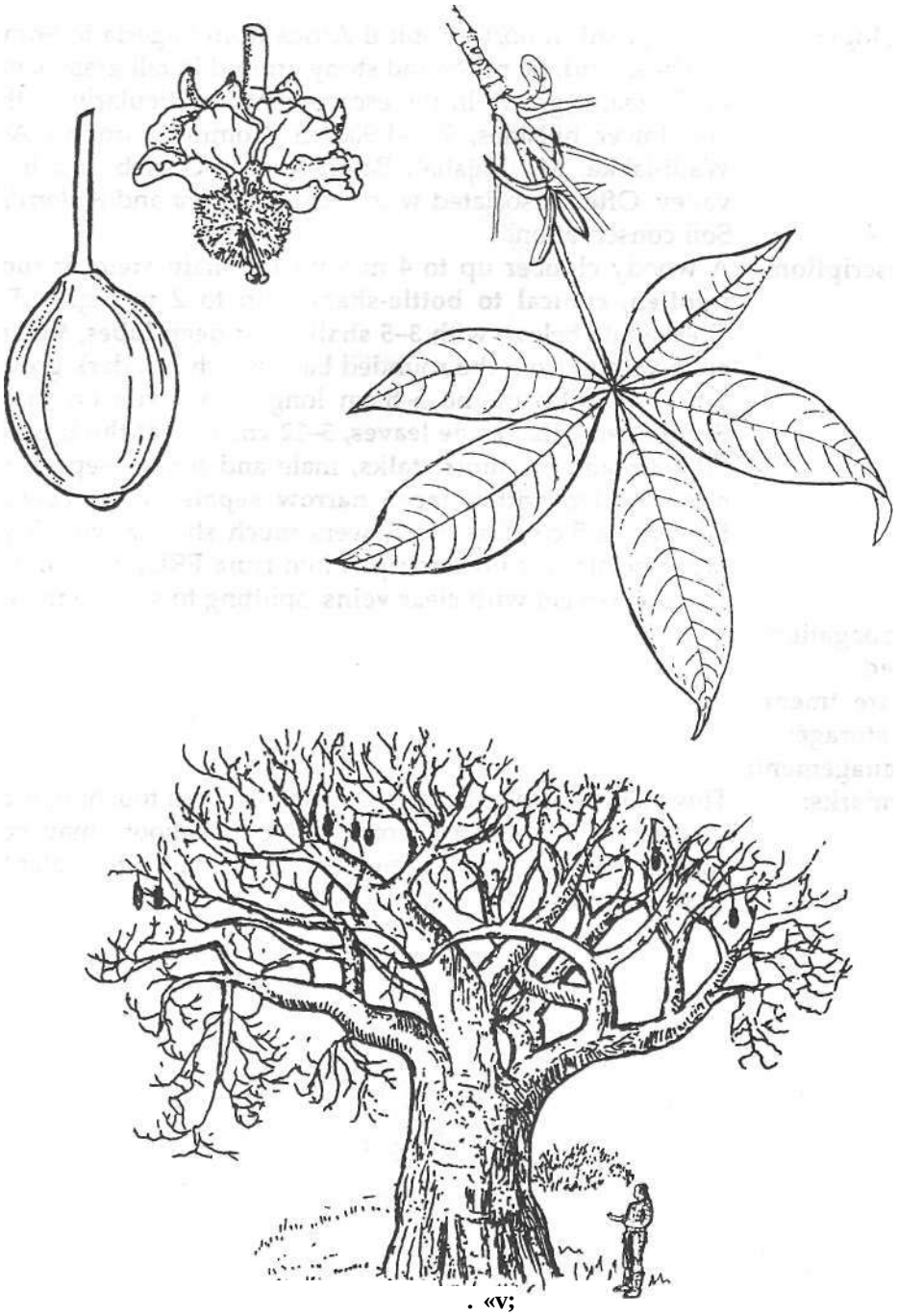
Seed: Seed collection is done in November-January. Poor seed germination. No. of seeds per kg: 1,500-2,500.

treatment: Immerse seeds in boiling water, pour out the water, leave to cool.

storage: Seed can be stored for a long time if kept cool and dry.

Management: Lopping, pollarding; fairly fast growing if undisturbed.

Remarks: The baobab is one of the longest living trees—up to 3,000 years—and old trees are often communal meeting places. Where baobabs are common, as in the Sahel, every part of the tree is used for some purpose. Hollow trunks can store large quantities of water. The soft fire-resistant wood is used to make utensils. The inner bark of young trees is cut to extract strong durable fibres used to make baskets and rope. The bark regenerates and can be cut again in a few years.



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