

Dombeya rotundifolia

Sterculiaceae

Indigenous

English: Wild pear

Nyanja: Matowo

Ecology: A small tree occurring over a wide range of altitudes, usually in wooded or open grassland, often near termite mounds. Outside Zambia it is found in Namibia and Botswana, and in East and Central Africa from Kenya south to northern South Africa. In Eastern Province, it is common on the plateau area in the miombo woodland, often on termite mounds.

Uses: Timber (carving), **food** (fruit), medicine (roots), fodder (leaves), bee forage, ornamental, fibres, bows (strong but flexible branches).

Description: A shapely deciduous tree to 4 m. **BARK:** dark brown, deeply furrowed. **LEAVES:** **oval to almost circular, 6–18 cm across, rough**, often very hairy below, edge unevenly toothed, stalked. **The leaves dry, very crisp and hard.** **FLOWERS:** **white-pink in many-flowered heads**, buds woolly. Sweet-scented blossom attracts bees. **FRUIT:** small, round, hairy capsules.

Propagation: Seedlings.

Seed info.: No. of seeds per kg: 35,000–40,000. Germination is good and completed after 3 weeks.

treatment: Not necessary.

storage: Can retain viability only for 3 months at room temperature.

Management: Coppicing.

Remarks: The wood makes good fuel, is strong and tough but often twisted. An attractive tree when in flower.



Enlarged
flower