

**SILVA CAPENSIS; OR, A DESCRIPTION OF
SOUTH AFRICAN FOREST-TREES AND
ARBORESCENT SHRUBS, USED FOR
TECHNICAL AND ECONOMICAL
PURPOSES, BY THE COLONISTS OF THE
CAPE OF GOOD HOPE**

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Silva capensis; or, A description of South African forest-trees and arborescent shrubs, used for technical and economical purposes, by the colonists of the cape of good hope by L. Pappe

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L. PAPPE

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COLONISTS OF THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE.

BY L. PAPPE, M.D.

Si quid novisti, rectius istis,
Candidus imperti, si non his utere moenan.
Horat. Epist. l. 1. 6, 67 and 68.

CAPE TOWN:
PRINTED BY VAN DE SANDT DE VILLIERS & Co.

1854.

K

TO

JOACHIM STEETZ, ESQ., M.D.,

OF HAMBURG,

THE ZEALOUS BOTANIST,

THIS LITTLE WORK

IS INSCRIBED, AS A SLIGHT MARK OF THE
RESPECT AND ESTEEM OF HIS FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.

P R E F A C E.

The good-will with which a former publication of mine (in 1850) on the medical properties of South African indigenous plants, was received, gives me that encouragement without which a writer, unless he be imbued with a notion of self-importance, will hardly venture to thrust himself again upon the indulgence of his readers. To enlarge on the present work, and to comment on its merits, will be the task of scientific and impartial judges. Suffice it to state, that the author has done his utmost, in collecting and digesting every information he could possibly obtain on so important a subject as the capability of the Cape colony with regard to useful Forest-trees and Arboresecent Shrubs. Whatever may be thought of this treatise, it will tend to open the eyes of the incredulous, and shew to the colonists and to the world at large, that South Africa is not so destitute of superior woods as most people imagine. Yet, although more than two centuries under civilization, and governed by European rulers, the Cape still remains, and will continue to remain, an almost inexhaustible source of novelty. What a pity it is that there is no *scientific establishment* here, for investigating into, and reporting on the vegetable wealth of the Colony. True it is, there is a *so-called Botanical Garden* in Cape Town, but it does not fulfil the purpose for which it was called into existence; it gives no satisfaction to scientific residents and strangers, and has become the object of severe but just censure from abroad.* It may do exceedingly well as a place of recreation, but will never meet the ends of *Science*, unless superintended by a *scientific botanist*.

In several parts of this essay, the reader will find observations on the wanton usage, annually exercised in the Colony, of setting fire to the mountains and bushes, an injurious practice, which in one

* Sir W. Hooker's *Journal of Botany and New Garden Miscellany*, Vol. 4, pag. 213 and 216.

sweep destroys a vast quantity of the most valuable timber and useful woods. When, twenty-four years ago, I arrived in the colony, *Protea coccinea*. R. Br., one of the handsomest of the proteaceous tribe, adorned the sloping sides of the Devil's-head Mountain. Since that period, this beautiful shrub has gradually disappeared, and seems now to have been altogether annihilated. It is well known besides, that wooded ravines and forests increase the moisture, and produce springs and running streams, the scarcity of which is but too often felt in this dry country. That the legislature of our days have not yet enacted sound and stringent laws against the repetition of an outrage of such magnitude, is a matter of deep regret and just astonishment.

It would be an act of ingratitude on my part, were I to withhold from public notice the names of those gentlemen, who, either by advice and information, or by furnishing necessary materials, contributed so much in furthering this publication. To S. HARTMAN, Esq., M.L.A., I am indebted for a great deal of intelligence, respecting the utility of many trees, peculiar only to the Eastern Province. To JOHN SCHEUBLE, Esq., of Cradock, near Port Elizabeth, for the alacrity and despatch, with which he procured specimens of the most valuable woods from the forests of the Uitenhage district. And lastly, but not least, to my most excellent friend CHARLES ZEYHER, Esq., the well-known South African Traveller and Botanist, whose experience and practical knowledge of the Cape Flora is only surpassed by his modesty.

Cape Town, 27th December 1854.

SOUTH AFRICAN FOREST-TREES AND ARBORESCENT SHRUBS.

CAPPARIDÆ. JUSS.

1. *CAPPARIS ALBITRUNCA*. BURCH. (*Witgatboom*).—*Branches* unarmed, spreading. *Leaves* coriaceous, lineari-elliptic, blunt, attenuate at base, entire, smooth, glaucous beneath. *Flowers* small, racemose. *Racemes* few-flowered, axillary, shorter than the leaves. *Calyx* 4 cleft; *petals* 4; *stamens* numerous. *Fruit*, a berry.

The trunk of this tree appears from a distance as white-washed, and hence its vernacular name. Height of stem from 10 to 12 feet; diameter from 9 to 10 inches. *Bark* pure white. *Wood* white, tough, used for yokes and other economical purposes.

Grows in the woods near Sunday River and other parts of the Eastern Province. Fl. October—November.

FLACOURTIANÆ. RICH.

2. *PHOBEROS MUNDIII*. W. ARNOTT. (*Eriudaphus* Nees. ab. E.) (*Klipdoorn*).—*Branches* spreading, twigs compressed; the young shoots from the root, thorny. *Leaves* coriaceous, rhomboid-elliptical, acute, bluntly toothed, veined, glossy above; *racemes* axillary 4-6 flowered. *Perianth* 10 cleft; its bottom clothed with dense, cushion-like hairs. *Flowers* small, white; *stamens* in many rows, numerous; *anthers* beaked; *style* thick. *Fruit* baccate, roundish.

Height between 20 and 30 feet, diameter 3 feet and more. *Bark* thin, grey. *Wood* hard, close, and highly useful for builders, and especially for wagonmakers.

Found in the aboriginal forests of the Tsitsikamma, and also, but sparingly, on the east side of Table Mountain, in Kirstenbosch. Fl. April—May.

3. *PHOBEROS ECKLONII*. W. ARNOTT. (*Eriudaphus* Nees. ab. E.) (*Roodpeer*).—*Branches* divaricating;

twigs compressed. *Leaves* broad, alternate, leathery, rhomboid-lanceolate, acute, indistinctly dentate, smooth, glaucous. *Racemes* axillary, simple, shorter than the leaves. *Perianth*, flowers and fruit, as in the former species.

A forest tree 20 to 30 feet high and 3 feet in diameter. *Bark* black, chinky. *Wood* hard, heavy, close; takes a fine polish, somewhat resembles Mahogany, and answers well for all kinds of furniture. In the Colony it is mostly used by wheel-wrights for axles, fellics, and spokes, and would suit well in the construction of mills.

This tree is common in the primeval thickets of the Victoria district, and flowers in May.

A third species of the genus: *Phoberos Zeyheri*. W. ARNOTT, (*Wolfs-thorn*), the spines of which attain a length of from 5 to 6 inches, is, I presume, what is called *Hoenderspoor* (Cockspur) by the Dutch inhabitants of the interior. It is from 15 to 20 feet high, and from 8 to 10 inches broad. The wood is said to be extremely hard, close, and durable.

4. *DOVYALIS ZIZYPHOIDES*. E. MEYER. (*Flacourtia rhamnoides*. Burch.)—*Branches* white, armed with patent, axillary, horizontal spines. *Leaves* on short stalks, alternate, membranaceous, ovate, entire or slightly dentate, veined, triplinerved at base, smooth. *Flowers* dioecious, axillary; male ones fascicled, female ones solitary. *Perianth* 5 fid, tomentose. *Corolla* none; *stamens* 18-20; *styles* 2; *stigmas* truncate. *Fruit* an ovate berry.

This tree attains a height of from 20 to 30, and a breadth of 2 or 3 feet. *Stem* knotty; *bark* greyish-white. *Wood* citron-yellow, close, hard, and chiefly used for yokes, various wagonwork, and rural implements.

The fruit (*Zuurbeje*, *Kaffer-pruim*), which has a sourish taste, is eaten by the natives, and brandy and vinegar have been distilled from it.

Common in the woods of the Krakakamma, Tzitsikamma, Olifantshoek, and Van Stadens Mountains. Fl. May—June.

5. *KIGGELARIA AFRICANA*. LIN. (*Speckhout*; *Kersenhout*.)—*Branches* erect; *twigs* purplish, more or less downy. *Leaves* stalked, lanceolate, unequally serrate, smooth above, downy beneath. *Flowers* white, dioecious; male ones small, racemose, nodding; female ones much

larger, solitary, stalked, erect, axillary. *Calyx* 5 cleft; *stamens* 10-12; *anthers* hairy, perforated at top; *petals* 5, glanduliferous at base; *styles* 5. *Capsule* globose, scabrid, one-celled, many-seeded.

Height of trunk 20 to 25 feet; diameter one foot and a half to two feet. *Wood* soft, spongy. Used occasionally for spars, rafters, rural implements, and fuel.

Common about Cape Town, Wynberg, &c. Fl. November.

TILIACEÆ. JUSS.

6. GREWIA OCCIDENTALIS. LIN. (*Kruysbesje*).—Shrubby. *Leaves* alternate, ovate, blunt, smooth; *peduncles* solitary, one-flowered. *Calyx* 5 cleft, deciduous, coloured within; *stamens* numerous; *anthers* roundish; *style* 1; *stigma* 4 lobed. *Petals* 5, bright-purple. *Drupe* 4 lobed, fleshy; *lobes* 2 locular, 2 seeded.

This shrub climbs 10 to 12 feet high, but is little more than 8 inches in diameter. *Stem* and *branches* very like those of the small leaved Elm. *Bark* smooth. The wood is very tough and bends extremely well. Being of fine grain, the larger pieces answer for turner's work. From this species, and from the *Grewia Obtusifolia*. Willd & *G. flava* DC., the Bushmen make their bows. The fruit are eaten by them and other savages.

Common near Cape Town and in many parts of the Colony. Fl. January—February.

SAPINDACEÆ. JUSS.

7. PTEROKYLON UTILE. ECKL. & Z. (*Nieshout*; *Sneeze-wood*.) *Stem* smooth; *branches* nodous. *Leaves* imparipinnate; *leaflets* in 6-7 pairs, coriaceous, entire, irregularly sided. *Flowers* dioecious, axillary, racemose, placed at the extremities of the branches, and between the leaves. *Calyx* 4 parted, *petals* 4, *stamens* 4; filaments smooth. *Styles* 2, *stigmas* capitate. *Capsule* 2 celled, 2 seeded, compressed; *seeds* winged.

A tree, from 20 to 30 feet in height, and 2-4 feet in diameter. The leaves have some resemblance to those of *Acer pseudoplatanus*. The wood is handsome, takes a fine polish, is strong, durable, and somewhat like Mahogany. It is used for various kinds of furniture and agricultural utensils. Being little affected by moisture, it serves as a desirable material in the construction of bridges and mills. From the