Contributions to the ethnobotany of the Southern Ndebele

by

Vusi Jackson Skosana

Research Project Report submitted in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the taught degree

Magister Scientiae (Environmental Ecology)

in the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences,
Centre for Environmental Studies

University of Pretoria

Pretoria

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. A.E. van Wyk

November 2011

To my children, Desmond and Zinhle
– you are always my inspiration.

Southern Ndebele huts beautifully painted and decorated with traditional designs and techniques. Photographs: The Author.

DECLARATION

I, Vusi Jackson Skosana, declare that the Research Project Report that I hereby submit for the taught degree Magister Scientiae (Environmental Ecology) at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.

Signature: .....

Date: NOVEMBER 2011

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ABSTRACT

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Plants have never been formally recorded in the Southern Ndebele language (*isiNdebele*). A need to investigate this aspect has resulted in the present study, which has been undertaken to identify and record the ethnobotanical (biocultural) significance of selected plants in Southern Ndebele, one of the 11 official languages of South Africa. The Southern Ndebele have a long history dating back to the early 1600s when the group first split from the original Zulu kingdom and entered the interior of South Africa. Even with such a long history, no comprehensive list of plant names in Southern Ndebele has been compiled to date. However, such a list has been recorded for the Northern Ndebele of Zimbabwe, also a Nguni language.

The Southern Ndebele of South Africa and the Northern Ndebele of Zimbabwe (also known as the 'Matabele') are distantly related, each group, however, maintaining its own culture and other practices. For purposes of this study yet another language, Northern Ndebele of South Africa, is considered as distinct from Northern Ndebele of Zimbabwe. The Northern Ndebele of South Africa consist of the Gegana group that went further north and settled around Potgietersrus (now Mokopane), Zebediela, Mashashane and other areas in the vicinity of Polokwane (formerly Pietersburg). Their language (known as *Sumayela* or *siNdebele* by some scholars) is currently not recognised as a provincial or national language. Speakers of Northern Ndebele are therefore probably often counted as speakers of Northern Sotho (*Sepedi*), one of the 11 official languages of South Africa and spoken predominantly in Limpopo Province. Although the two Ndebele language groups of South Africa are

geographically close to one another, plant names in Northern Ndebele of South Africa have not been considered in the present study.

The term Southern Ndebele is used mainly to refer to all people who speak the similarly named language. Although the majority of this cultural group reside in the former KwaNdebele homeland, much of the region now forms part of Mpumalanga Province. Even though the study was conducted in a particular area of Mpumalanga, speakers of Southern Ndebele are not necessarily confined to Mpumalanga, but are widespread across South Africa.

A qualitative survey was undertaken by conducting a number of one-on-one and group interviews with knowledgeable elders and professionals who know and understand the Southern Ndebele tradition and culture. Their views, experiences and perceptions about the plants used by the Southern Ndebele were recorded (supplied on a DVD accompanying this report). Voucher specimens of the plants were collected and deposited in the H.G.W.J. Schweickerdt Herbarium [PRU], Department of Plant Science, University of Pretoria.

The multiple uses of the plants identified as well as the associated cultural beliefs and traditional conservation measures as practised by the Southern Ndebele, were recorded. The recording and listing of plants in Southern Ndebele could go a long way to ensure better communication, enhanced teaching and improved conservation practices. The study focused mainly on woody plants, most of which are native to South Africa, as well as on a few alien species useful to the Southern Ndebele. A list of shrubs and some herbaceous indigenous healing plants is also included in this report.

Names of more than 100 plant species and infraspecific taxa are presented alphabetically according to scientific name. Also supplied are the family name, the Southern Ndebele name, and the locality and number of the relevant voucher specimen. As a Southern Ndebele by birth, the author has included his personal insight and knowledge of some of the plant names as well as some cultural background information as part of the introduction to the Southern Ndebele. A list of all Southern Ndebele terms/words and plant names used in the study is supplied to clarify and explain their meaning.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Southern Africa not only encompasses a rich floristic diversity of more than 30 000 species (Van Wyk & Smith 2001), but is also a diverse region in terms of human cultures (Van Wyk *et al.* 2011). This means that plants generally form an important component of people's lives. Knowing and understanding the biocultural significance of plants creates an opportunity to explore and show the relevant respect and develop and improve ways and means of conserving and preserving.

This species richness and cultural diversity is a feature of South Africa and therefore recording and documenting the biocultural significance of plants is essential. With the changes in socio-economic conditions, valuable indigenous knowledge about plants in general is at risk of disappearing. The study of the use of plants by local people, or ethnobotany, is still relatively under-developed in South Africa, and knowledge of the use of indigenous plants needs urgent documentation before it is lost for future generations (Van Wyk & Gericke 2000). The aim of this study is to record and list the names of plants used by the Southern Ndebele, including their cultural and conservation significance.

The compilation of a Southern Ndebele dictionary is currently under way and the names of organisms should be included, also the common names of plants used by speakers of the language. Inclusion of such names would immensely enhance communication and it would also be a most useful tool for teachers and learners in the field of conservation.

1.2 Objectives

- To list and record names of plants in the Southern Ndebele language.

  There has never been a comprehensive list of plant names in the language and this has left a huge gap both in terms of cultural heritage and knowledge base, particularly with regard to plants used in the past, many of which are still being used today. Knowledge about these plants rests with the older generation but many have passed away without having shared it with the youth. Such knowledge is mostly transferred verbally from one person to the next, without modern records or documentation.

- To provide an orthography of plant names in Southern Ndebele.

  The current development of the Southern Ndebele dictionary brings an important element of linguistic understanding of many words used by the Southern Ndebele. Orthography and linguistic aspects are most important elements of creative communication and understanding (Watt & Breyer-Brandwijk 1962). This dictionary, together with the orthography of vernacular plant names in Southern Ndebele, will not only standardise the spelling of these names but will also improve

pronunciation. The present study aims to contribute to this linguistic and orthographic process and in so doing help with the development of the Southern Ndebele language.

- To assess affinities of plant names in Southern Ndebele with those in other languages.

  There are names recorded in the study that have been borrowed from or are shared with other Nguni groups, with Tswana (*Setswana*), Pedi (Northern Sotho; *Sepedi*; *Sesotho sa Leboa*) and with languages of Indo-European origin (English and Afrikaans). The study assesses these affinities and brings an element of clarity by explaining some of them. For better understanding, the study also tried to capture slang names in use for some of the plants. Slang words are given between square brackets [ ].

- To record the ethnobotanical usage of plants by the Southern Ndebele people.

  The general usage of plants by the Southern Ndebele is not unique, but there are specific uses of plants that are totally different from uses by other Nguni groups. These uses have been recorded and documented. Some of them are similar to uses by groups other than the Nguni of South Africa, such as Pedi, Tswana, Venda (*Tshivenda*) and the Northern Ndebele of Zimbabwe. It is easier to note the similarities between these groups when one views the practices of the various Bantu groups holistically and in general.

- To record the biocultural significance of these useful plants.

  The study seeks to find links between the way the Southern Ndebele view and treat plants listed in the study in terms of traditional and cultural conservation practices and their way of life. The study attempts to explain how Southern Ndebele culture and people perceive, interact with and appreciate these plants.

- To capture the traditional views on sustainable utilisation held by the Southern Ndebele.

  The study attempts to breach the gap between the traditional way of understanding and utilising these plants and the Southern Ndebele's own understanding of the ecology of natural resources utilisation. It provides various ways and means that can be employed to sustain the existence and survival of these plants and to improve conservation practices to manage this natural resource.

CHAPTER 2

STUDY AREA AND METHODS

2.1 Location of study area

The study was conducted in the area previously known as KwaNdebele (a former homeland established under the past regime). It used to be a small rural settlement about 70 km northeast of Pretoria. Since 1994, the population and settlement in the area have grown significantly.

Many people living in this area are predominantly Southern Ndebele-speaking. The areas covered by the study area include Kameelrivier 'A' (Madubaduba), Wolwekraal (Maphothla) and Mdala Nature Reserve, which fall under Dr. J.S. Moroka Local Municipality. Further to the east, the study area covers part of Steve Tshwete Local Municipality, which includes the towns, villages and settlements of Middelburg and Hendrina. However, the study focused only on Doornkop, Bankplaas and parts of Loskop Dam and the Matombu area. Both these municipalities fall under the much bigger district municipality of Nkagala.

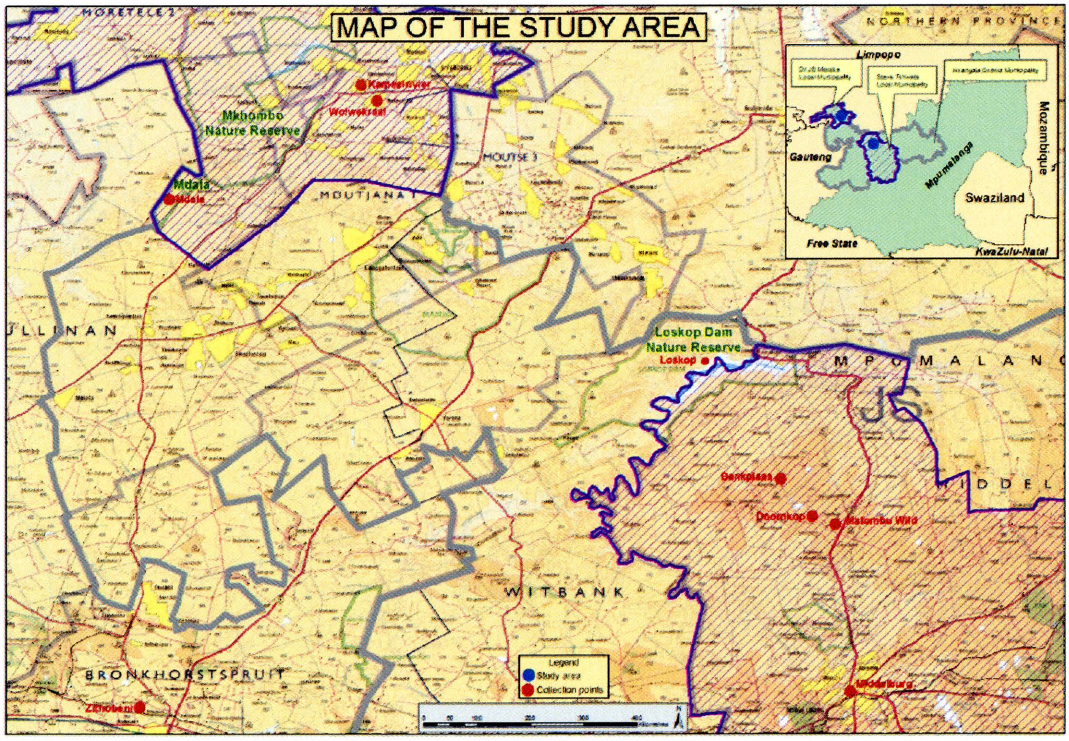

FIGURE 1.—The study area. Dr. J.S. Moroka and Steve Tshwete Municipalities are represented by the blue dots; the red dots show the collection points. Only one species was collected outside the two study areas, near Bronkhorstspruit. Source: GIS Unit, Department of Environmental Affairs.

Only one plant specimen has been collected outside the core study areas, in Zithobeni near Bronkhorstspruit. Although the particular species is valuable to the Southern Ndebele, it has not been found in the core study area as shown in Figure 1.

Different as they are from the other Ndebele groups, the Southern Ndebele used to live closely with two other distinct cultural groups in the past (Van Vuuren 1983), a situation that has not changed much. The first group are the Pedi-speaking people of the former homeland of Lebowa, now part of Limpopo Province. The second group are the Tswana of whom the majority are currently residing in what is today known as the North West Province. Today many Southern Ndebele still live in these two provinces.

2.1.1 Demography and population size

In 2001, there were 703 906 Southern Ndebele in South Africa (Statistics South Africa 2001). The total population of the Dr. J.S. Moroka Municipality is estimated at about 243 304 citizens, comprising mostly rural communities, while the population of the Steve Tshwete Local Municipality is estimated at over 143 000. Most people live in the towns of Middelburg and Mhluzi, while others reside in smaller towns such as Hendrina and Kwazamokuhle, at surrounding mines, in villages and in vast rural areas (Statistics South Africa 2001).

2.1.2 Education

Less than 23% of the population of the Dr. J.S. Moroka Municipality have a Grade 12 or higher qualification, while 33% had no schooling at all. This has serious implications for employment and income-generating opportunities as well as academic development of the population. In total, 44% of the population have some form of schooling and can be regarded as literate. About 25% of the working population have some form of craft- or trade-related skills that could be used to the benefit of the local economy, 18.7% are service workers, shop and market sales workers, and only 3.0% are skilled in agriculture and fishery activities (Statistics South Africa 2001).

On the other hand, 12% of heads of households in the Steve Tshwete Local Municipality have not received any schooling, while a further 3% have attended school only up to Grade 2. Some 15% have Grade 12, whereas 10% have Grade 12 plus an additional qualification such as a diploma or degree; 53% have had primary or secondary education up to Grades 3–11 (Statistics South Africa 2001).

2.1.3 Socio-economic conditions

The local economies of the two municipalities in the study area are characterised by similar activities. In both cases, some of the population are employed directly by the municipality or by the provincial government. Many, however, are employed in and around Gauteng Province or elsewhere in the country. The municipalities, together with the provincial government, attempt to stimulate job opportunities through programmes such as *masibuyele emasimini* and many other socially related endeavours.

2.1.4 Biomes and vegetation types

The core study areas are situated in Mpumalanga Province, one of the nine provinces of South Africa. The vegetation of Mpumalanga falls in mainly three of the nine biomes of South Africa, namely the Grassland Biome (highveld and escarpment hills), Savanna Biome (escarpment foothills and lowveld) and Forest Biome (Lötter & Ferrar 2007). The study area is dominated by the following vegetation types:

(a) Loskop Mountain Bushveld, which occurs on the mountains in the vicinity of Loskop Dam, extends as far as Bronkhorstspruit and covers parts of Rust de Winter to the west. The vegetation and landscape are dominated by low mountain ranges and open savanna on middle and lower slopes. The most noticeable trees include species of *Combretum* and *Acacia* as well as *Burkea africana* and *Protea caffra* (Mucina & Rutherford 2006).

(b) Loskop Thornveld, which is dominated by valleys and plains that form part of the upper Olifants River catchment. The woodland is mostly thorny and tall, often dominated by species of *Acacia* (Mucina & Rutherford 2006).

(c) Springbokvlakte Thornveld, with open dense savanna dominated mostly by species of *Acacia*, interspersed by flat plains with grassland (Mucina & Rutherford 2006).

2.2 Methods

The information contained in this report was obtained through one-on-one as well as group interviews with knowledgeable people in the study areas (see Appendix 1). Many interviews were conducted with elderly villagers, some of them practising traditional healing and therefore with a wealth of information on plants used as healing herbs and for many other applications. Some were not traditional healers, but still had great knowledge and information on the native names and uses of plants, particularly culturally and medicinally. Professional people, especially nature conservationists with a background in ecology and conservation, were also consulted with a view to verifying the names and plant specimens. They provided information on the conservation status of the plants and their status in the wild.

Young people were also interviewed to obtain their feelings and understanding of the subject. Some provided information they learnt from parents or at school and others merely concurred with the interviewer.

Specimens of plants were collected, identified and named in Southern Ndebele. During the interviews, it became clear that elderly people generally knew their plants very well and that they could identify the collected specimens on the spot. They were furthermore able to provide information on the uses of a particular plant and the significance thereof. Many of the elders, particularly traditional healers, knew the native names but not the English common names, obviously because many of them had little or no formal schooling.

The interviews with traditional healers were challenging and it was sometimes difficult to get information about the uses of certain plants, especially those of significant importance. In the case of rare or scarce healing herbs they often did not want to share the information

straight away as they needed to have trust before they would do so. However, some willingly divulged and provided information as they understood the need to share their knowledge.

During the interviews, it was found that women were more objective and straightforward and provided much more information than men. It was therefore always better to interview a man and a woman together – if the man was unwilling to share knowledge on a particular plant, the woman would provide it and by so doing prompt the man to intervene or interrupt. This enabled the interviewer to get as much information as possible. Some people, especially traditional healers, preferred one-on-one interviews for fear of giving away information, although this was not the norm.

When two healers were interviewed together, both tended to hold back for fear of reprisal from the other or simply for fear of giving away valuable information to an adversary who may then gain the upper hand. Because they were healers vying for the same market niche, both were reluctant to reveal strengths or weaknesses to a possible opponent. At times this rivalry made it difficult to obtain information.

It was sometimes hard for someone who was not a Southern Ndebele by birth or who had not gone through the rite of passage to manhood, to get information from certain sources. Many interviewees preferred to divulge information only to someone regarded as a man according to Southern Ndebele culture and tradition. However, the author experienced no problems in this regard as he had already gone through this rite of passage and it was therefore easier to speak and gain information from such sources.

Information was also gathered from various publications. It was sometimes shown to interviewees to confirm and verify, particularly information on the uses of plants for economic, artistic and healing purposes, and it was mostly well verified and accepted.

All official plant material gathered as voucher specimens, was collected by the author. The voucher specimens were lodged at the H.G.W.J. Schweickerdt Herbarium of the Department of Plant Science at the University of Pretoria, for drying, mounting and scientific identification. The specimens are now housed in the Herbarium as part of its collection and for possible future reference. To assist with the identification of plant samples, the following sources were freely consulted: Fox & Norwood-Young (1982), Coates Palgrave (1983), Roberts (1990), Van Wyk & Van Wyk (1997) and Van Wyk *et al.* (1997).

CHAPTER 3

INTRODUCTION TO THE SOUTHERN NDEBELE

3.1 The Southern Ndebele language

Contact between languages and the mixing of languages on a daily basis are unavoidable realities for South African indigenous languages (Mahlangu 2007). Southern Ndebele, one of the 11 official languages of the country, is no exception. It belongs to the Nguni or Zunda group and is spoken mostly in Mpumalanga, Gauteng, Limpopo and the North West Province (Skhosana 2009). It is often confused with Northern Ndebele of South Africa (spoken mainly in the Mokopane (Potgietersrus), Mashashane and Zebediela areas) and Northern Ndebele of Zimbabwe (also known as 'Matabele') because of, among other things, the past connection between these groups. However, three distinct languages are involved (Skhosana 2009). The Northern Ndebele of South Africa should therefore not be confused with the Northern Ndebele of Zimbabwe; the two languages are markedly different from one another, although both are related to Southern Ndebele. The Northern Ndebele of South Africa consist of the Gegana group that went further north and settled around Potgietersrus (now Mokopane), Zebediela, Mashashane and other areas in the vicinity of Polokwane (formerly Pietersburg) (Mahlangu 2007). Their language (known as *Sumayela* or *siNdebele* by some scholars) is currently not recognised as a provincial or national language. Speakers of Northern Ndebele are therefore probably often counted as speakers of Northern Sotho (*Sepedi*), one of the 11 official languages of South Africa, spoken mainly in Limpopo Province (Mahlangu 2007).

The current dilemma that surrounds the two Ndebele languages of South Africa is that while they are regarded in some linguistic circles as separate languages, they are officially regarded as variants of the same language (Mashiyane 2002). Unlike South African Northern Ndebele, which is not fully recognised in the South African Constitution, Southern Ndebele enjoys full recognition despite its history of previous marginalisation and discouragement (Mashiyane 2002). After the establishment of the homeland of KwaNdebele in 1979, the then KwaNdebele government had to fulfil a linguistic obligation that required it to have its own formal, standardised language (Mahlangu 2007). It would be the medium of teaching and learning in all homeland schools.

The first publication on the orthography and spelling of this language appeared in 1982, before the inception of *isiNdebele* as a language of learning and teaching in 1985 (Mahlangu 2007). At present, *isiNdebele* is taught in Mpumalanga, Gauteng and Limpopo schools and has speakers in all provinces. Many Southern Ndebele, however, learnt Zulu (*isiZulu*) at school and the Zulu influence became dominant, especially in writing and speaking. One would therefore imagine that there are two generations of Southern Ndebele – one who learnt Zulu but speak Southern Ndebele at home and another who learnt and now speak Southern Ndebele as a complete package. Some words in Southern Ndebele have either a Pedi or Tswana influence, partly due to their past history and connections. Such words often form a prominent part of plant names recorded during the present study.

3.2 History of the Southern Ndebele nation

The Southern Ndebele trace their ancestry back to present-day KwaZulu-Natal. The journey is said to date back to Chief Mafana, the first known chief of the Ndebele (Van Vuuren 1983). Mafana had a son, named Mhlanga, who later succeeded him. In the early 1600s Mhlanga's son, named Musi, decided to move away from his family (later to become the mighty Zulu nation) and to settle in the hills of present-day Gauteng near Pretoria. This group became the Ndebele people, among the first to leave KwaZulu-Natal and move into the interior of the country (Van Vuuren 1983).

Chief Musi had seven sons, namely Manala, Ndzundza, Mhwaduba, Dlomo, Mthombeni (Gegana), Skosana and Sibasa (Van Vuuren 1983). Cracks started appearing among his sons as a result of a succession battle, with conflict brewing about who should succeed Chief Musi in the event of his death. Two of his senior sons, Manala, who is said to have been the rightful heir, and Ndzundza, the younger of the two but also senior by lineage, started fighting over the chieftaincy (Van Vuuren 1983).

Because of the succession dispute, Musi's chiefdom became divided into the Manala and the Ndzundza as soon after Chief Musi's death, the eldest son, Manala, was named future chief in accordance with the rites and systems as they were known to exist (Van Vuuren 1983). This was heavily challenged by Ndzundza and the group was divided by the resulting protests and conflicts, each moving his separate way (Van Vuuren 1983). During the fight, it is said that Ndzundza was defeated. Humiliated, he ran away from the chiefdom.

Together with his followers, Ndzundza then headed eastwards, settling in the upper part of the Steelpoort River basin at a place called KwaSimkhulu, near present-day Belfast and leaving Manala to be made chief of his late father's domain (Van Vuuren 1983). Two further factions, led by other sons, then broke away from the Ndebele core. The Gegana moved northwards and settled in the region of present-day Zebediela, in South Africa referred to as the Northern Ndebele but they should not be confused with the Northern Ndebele of Zimbabwe. The other section, under Dlomo, returned to the east coast from where the Ndebele had originally come (Van Vuuren 1983). Musi's other sons went their separate ways and settled in various places around present-day Mpumalanga, only to rejoin the amaNdzunzda at a later stage.

During this time, a number of changes occurred in the various Ndebele groups. Some were absorbed by other dominant groups such as the Sotho-speaking or Pedi groups in the north (Van Vuuren 1983). Descendants of Manala and Ndzundza maintained a more recognisably distinct cultural identity, and retained a language that was closer to the Nguni spoken by their coastal forebears (and to present-day Zulu), hence the formation of the Southern and Northern Ndebele groups. This could also be attributed to the fact that the latter groups could fight back when they had to engage in battle and were therefore not easily absorbed.

The Ndzundza started developing from strength to strength as a tribe and many settled alongside the Pedi-speaking people around the Steelpoort River. Some were scattered because of sporadic attacks and raids by Mzilikazi and his followers (Van Vuuren 1983). There were also faction fighting among the Ndzundza after the death of Magodongo, one of their chiefs. This further weakened the tribe and created rifts and factions among them. With the arrival of white farmers in the 1840s, many within the tribe were isolated and eventually lost their land and freedom to the farmers, who not only attacked them but also engaged in regular conflicts that eventually defeated the Ndzundza tribe. These conflicts escalated over the years, with white farmers overpowering the Ndzundza tribe and eventually taking over their land and enslaving many of the Ndzundza followers into becoming farm labourers. Two of these conflicts were the war at Konomtjharhelo and the Nyabela rebellion, for example.

Defeated, the tribe eventually became subordinate to the victorious white farmers (Van Vuuren 1983). By virtue of being defeated and landless, the Ndzundza tribe were then scattered all over the southern regions of the then Transvaal and many sought refuge around areas such as Belfast, Lydenburg and Middelburg. Others were later assigned to the then northern Transvaal, which was dominated by the Sotho- or Pedi-speaking former homeland of Lebowa (Van Vuuren 1983). These areas included the greater part of Monsterlus and surrounding areas. Today there is still a dispute as to whether the area should remain part of Limpopo or whether it should be incorporated into Mpumalanga Province.

Despite all the attacks and oppression, many of the Southern Ndebele managed to keep their identity and uphold their tradition, culture and language. They were later assigned to the then homeland area of KwaNdebele. In 1981, KwaNdebele homeland was declared a 'self-governing' territory (Phatlane 2002) and Siyabuswa became its capital. The newly established homeland, too, was never short of conflicts. Instead of integrating the homeland into the mainstream South African labour market as KwaNdebele was geographically closer to Pretoria, the then South African government opted to drive as many of the people as possible away from white areas. This led to an increasing demand for large-scale transportation of commuters to and from work (Phatlane 2002).

However, since there were no significant industries that could offer employment around the former homeland, the population had to endure the suffering of commuting. Some had to leave their homes as early as 2 o'clock in the morning to reach the workplace and returned at night, leaving very little time to share with their families (Magubane 2005).

To meet this demand, the government consequently heavily subsidised these commuters (Phatlane 2002). Today, buses still transport many of them to and from work every day. During this time, the homeland government insisted that it wanted independence. It was not a popular idea and many people, especially the youth, were up in arms and resisted the move, resulting in a major uprising in 1986. The impact of oppression on the Southern Ndebele, as on many other ethnic groups, is huge yet little has been said about it (Phatlane 2002).

The events of 1986 around the independence issue provided the basis for an analysis (Phatlane 2002). After 1994, the homeland was eventually reintegrated into South Africa and became part of Mpumalanga Province. The dispute over the traditional leadership of the Southern Ndebele continued even after the advent of democracy in South Africa. The conflicts and disputes were about the rightful leader or king of the Southern Ndebele. The dispute was tabled before government and later settled after a Commission of Enquiry was appointed to look into the traditional leadership of the Southern Ndebele.

According to the Commission report, the late paramount chief Mayitjha III was widely recognised as the king of the Southern Ndebele although, strictly speaking, he was not entitled to this position. His lineage is traced from Ndzundza, one of the sons of Musi, a king of amaNdebele. Ndzundza became a formidable opponent in the succession battle over his kingship with his brother Manala, who was the rightful heir and successor-in-title to the kingship of amaNdebele because he was born of the great wife, while Ndzundza was the first-born son of the second wife. The report also recalls a battle of succession that ensued between the two which saw Ndzundza eventually breaking away from the chiefdom (Nhlapo Commission Report 2007).

Manala returned to the royal homestead at KwaMnyamana to accordingly ascend the throne to become the King after Musi's death. AmaNdzundza emerged and developed independently of the original amaNdebele. The advent of the homeland system and the creation of tribal authorities saw amaNdzundza further regrouping. The report further indicates that, in 1967, Mabhoko, the traditional leader of amaNdzundza, was appointed as the first paramount chief of the Ndzundza-Mabhoko traditional community. In 1984, Mabhoko was succeeded by Mayitjha III, who died in 2005 (Nhlapo Commission Report 2007).

After all the deliberations, the report concludes that the Commission made a determination that saw the kingship of amaNdebele as a whole being restored under the lineage of Manala-Mbhongo, and that the only other positions of leadership available within the traditional institution of amaNdebele in terms of the Framework Act, are senior traditional leadership and headmanship (Nhlapo Commission Report 2007).

This pronouncement by the Nhlapo Commission meant that according to the customary law of succession of amaNdebele, the house of Mbhongo I, which is the house of the current incumbent, Makhosonke II, is the rightful lineage to hold the position of king of aManala and amaNdebele (Southern Ndebele) as a whole (Nhlapo Commission Report 2007).

3.3 Social life and culture

This section describes the ways in which the Southern Ndebele live, the way they interact with each other and with the outside world. This includes the way they marry, their music, and their traditions and customs, to mention just a few.

3.3.1 Singing and dancing

The Southern Ndebele music is characterised by singing, clapping and dancing. During ceremonies, men will sing, clap and do a dance called *ingadla*, which entails the systematic lifting of the left and right foot and hitting the ground in a co-ordinated manner. Women also sing and dance, their dance being called *uwan*. They sing and blow a pipe (*ifengwana*) or at times a horn, followed by systematic clapping and lifting of mainly one foot and hitting the ground, sometimes two at a time, depending on the song. Southern Ndebele do sing music similar to the traditional *maskandi* type, using instruments such as keyboards and mainly guitars, with the lyrics in Southern Ndebele. One of the oldest traditionally used instruments is a reed flute called *isdonodono*. It produces a sweet sound and leads to sudden attention, forcing someone to listen to it immediately when one starts playing it.

3.3.2 Initiation of boys: *ingoma* or *ukuwela*

This practice is conducted by both the Ndzundza and Manala clans. It is highly respected and kept mostly secret. Because of the secrecy surrounding initiation, it is not easy to find information on the day-to-day experiences of those initiated (Magubane 2005). Each initiation is given a stage name or *intanga* recognising all those initiated during that specific year. The difference between the two clans is that the amaNdzundza use 15 such stage names whereas the aManala use 13 stage names. Male initiation (*ingoma* or *ukuwela)*, which includes circumcision, is done in early winter, every three years in accordance with the Southern Ndebele calendar.

The whole initiation process is managed and controlled by the chieftainship and is spread across all rural villages, including urban or townships. Local chiefs or *indunas* are then delegated to manage their respective areas on behalf of the paramount chiefs and will report back as and when required and requested to do so. The process starts earlier, before the actual circumcision. Boys who know and have been informed by their elders or parents that they will undergo initiation, start preparing as early as three months or more before the event.

Preparations would involve, among other things, *ukukhonga* (practising initiation songs and poems) and *ukuzila* (abstaining from eating certain food, especially fatty and salty food, as well as from sexual intercourse with a girl prior to circumcision, especially boys who are already sexually active). This is done as a token of respect for the demanding traditional passage one has to undertake. After being circumcised, the initiates or *abakhethwa* are kept in the bush at a built-up kraal, called *umphadu*, for a period of two months. During this time, older boys and men who have already passed this stage would come and teach them important lessons of life such as respect, tolerance and creativity, as well as how to face the challenges of life after initiation.

Boys who are still at school would be encouraged to return to school to finish and those who are working are advised to keep to their job and save as much as possible in order to get married and start a family. After two months, the boys return home in the company of men. They are no longer regarded as boys, but as men, and are welcomed back into the community

as such. A ceremony will then be conducted for every single one of them. Many would slaughter a cow or bull *ukuhlaba* and issue gifts as a token of appreciation, happiness and welcoming back to the community.

Some go without these ceremonies if their parents' financial situation does not allow it and postpone the slaughtering for another day; this might be a month or months after their return from the bush. When it does eventually happen, the same process is followed.

3.3.3 Initiation of girls: *ukuthomba*

Not much is known about the practice because it is traditionally kept secret. From personal experience as a Southern Ndebele, the author knows that the initiation (*iqude*) is centralised to one family, preparations are done from that particular family, lasting a month. Before the actual initiation, the older girls who have already undergone initiation will come and do what is called *ukuthambisa*. In brief it means that they prepare for the entire initiation by soaking maize and grain sorghum in water to make traditional beer, a sign of the upcoming initiation ceremony in that family. Although the initiation of girls takes place in their own homes, it is common for several girls to undergo this event at the same time and emerge simultaneously to celebrate their new status in the company of other initiates (Magubane 2005).

Women from the surrounding village will often come and install a white flag, called *iphomede*, at the gate of the homestead to signal that an initiation or *iqude* will take place. On the Friday of the initiation, women from the surrounding village will then gather around the fire with a persistent traditional drum beating and signalling that *iqude* is in progress. Males are not allowed near the place on that day. Initiation of girls could be done any time of year, but it is mostly performed in summer during the December holidays when schools are closed and when everybody is at home to enjoy the ceremony.

In the olden days, during a girl's initiation, uninitiated boys, called *abesegwabo*, would engage in stick-fighting. The build-up started earlier that week and on the Saturday of the initiation ceremony these boys would engage in stick-fighting as a play or for a girl. The loser would most likely lose his girl to the victor. Stick-fighting of this nature is no longer practised for fear of fatal injuries and casualties.

After a month, the girl would come out in a ceremonious celebration called *ukuhlubula* and soon thereafter she is inducted into womanhood and is then no longer regarded as a girl. As young women become more educated, the role their initiation once played in reinforcing hierarchies like these has gradually been eroded (Magubane 2005). The same could be said for boys, though this is not yet the norm.

3.3.4 Traditional marriages and weddings

Marriages are arranged between the families of the groom and bride. Before a man may marry, he must have gone through initiation. A woman is also expected to have been through the women's initiation process. However, due to mixed marriages today, initiation, especially

that of women, is no longer a prerequisite. Marriage is treated with respect and always involves the ancestral practices, both families often informing the ancestors of the process and asking for their blessing. For the groom to be fully married, he should bring along about six or even eight head of cattle, which are usually called *inkomo zobukhazi* in *isiNdebele*.

These days money is given instead of cattle, but this does not do away with slaughtering. With changes brought about by Western civilisation, among other things, sometimes only two head of cattle are slaughtered to perform the wedding ceremony and the rest is paid in cash. During traditional *ubukhazi*, the bride-to-be goes into a secluded room for up to a week and the elder women in the community go there to coach her about her role as a wife and about her duties as a married woman in the village. She leaves the room only when she needs to stretch her legs, and then accompanied by a young bridesmaid called *ipelesi.*

On the Thursday of that week, the bride and groom's friends who have also gone through a traditional marriage would visit the couple to wish them well and to give them further advice on married life. On the Friday, the bride is then accompanied to her home where all the *lobola* and *ukuhlaba* are completed. The couple are allowed to have a Western wedding during that weekend if they wish. On the Saturday, the cattle are slaughtered at the bride's home and the meat is shared between the two families.

That afternoon, the bride and a few of her family return to the groom's home with the rest of the groom's entourage to complete the process. This includes demarcating a place where they will live as a couple. More often it is in the same yard as the groom's home, as well as *ukukotiza*, meaning that the bride should pay her dues by being at her new in-laws' home, cooking and washing, among other things, for them for the duration of her term at their place.

The couple can decide later whether to live at the parents' home or to have their own; in the meantime, they stay in a separately built hut, called *icatjana*, until they leave.

3.4 Houses and surroundings

In the olden days, families followed ancient customs and built homes with round walls. The houses were classified into categories, for example a house for the head of the family, belonging to the father and mother. Then there were other houses for girls, called *ilawu*, and for boys, and another house for storing food, water and so on.

Each house was regarded with the necessary respect and treated as such. These days however, this type of arrangement is no longer widely practised as much bigger houses, influenced by Western style, are being built. A home is characterised by a traditional meeting area, called *ibandla*, apart from the main house. Only men are allowed to sit, talk and discuss issues there; women are not allowed but, when required, normally sit some distance away as a sign of respect. Today, many, if not most houses are characterised by *ibandla*, which apart from being just a meeting place, is also used to welcome and receive local men during ceremonies. Men gather at *ibandla*, cook, and drink traditional beer.

3.4.1 Paintings and beadwork

The Southern Ndebele are known for their excellent and colourful paintings, *ukugwala*, and artwork. They have received international acclaim for their mural decorations since their paintings first came to the world's attention in the late 1940s (Magubane 2005). This skill, passed from one generation to the next, depicts their creativity and love for paintings. The paintings are expressed in greater length as they are done to showcase emotions and also to communicate. Many homes are decorated with colourful paintings depicting the pride and tranquillity of the Southern Ndebele. Many houses around the former KwaNdebele homeland are still beautifully decorated with traditional paintings, even to this day.

The age-old paints are obtained from stones, ground ochre, clay, ash and plant pulp, and mixed with cattle dung or soft sand. Today, with much improvement and Western influence, many paints are easily bought from retail stores and mixed to produce more colourful designs. Many paintings are done in large numbers, especially by women, but men also do traditional paintings. This art has remained a strong identity synonymous with Southern Ndebele life from the past to the present. In recent years, the number of women who practise painting has dropped significantly as the younger generation is growing up in a society influenced by different values and experiences brought about by the new era of technology (Magubane 2005).

It is not clear when Southern Ndebele women first began making the distinctive beadwork garments they and their families wear (Magubane 2005). Beads play a significant role, especially in ceremonies as they are worn by both initiates and parents. Colour is important in designing the beadwork and most Southern Ndebele use white decorated with a few other colours (Magubane 2005). These days, one finds beadwork and colourful Southern Ndebele paintings in stores and stalls around the country.

3.5 Religious beliefs and taboos

The Southern Ndebele belong to various religious denominations. Most are Christians and members of various Christian churches, from Roman Catholic to traditional African churches. Muslim belief is also practised, though not to a large extent. Most Southern Ndebele also believe in ancestors, *abezimu*, thought to be a link between them and God. However, others no longer believe in ancestors and only follow a Christian way of life, while many practise both religions.

There is a strong belief that witchcraft exists in the society and many people also have a strong view on it. It is believed that witches (*abaloyi*) are the ones responsible for witchcraft practices such as striking someone with lightning, making someone insane or mentally ill, or making someone desert his family or home, curse or even kill. To be healed, an *inyanga* (diviner) is consulted for assistance but many people prefer to consult with various churches as well. *Inyanga* typically wear, among other things, hides and beads, specifically white and red ones, which are associated with ancestors and are believed to augment the spiritual

powers of the wearer (Magubane 2005). They still use traditional medicines derived from plants as well as modern medicines from a hospital or clinic. Many of the plants listed in the present report form a part of the traditional medicine and herbal resources of the Southern Ndebele.

To this day though, healers and diviners are highly regarded by traditionalists. There is strong belief that the decision to dedicate one's life to this profession is dictated by a calling from the ancestors, after which the novice serves an apprenticeship with an experienced practitioner (Magubane 2005). Many Southern Ndebele also strongly believe that if a young man or woman does not go through the initiation process, the ancestors would turn their back on them.

CHAPTER 4

WOODY PLANTS USED BY THE SOUTHERN NDEBELE

4.1 Overview of woody plants used by the Southern Ndebele

The plants listed in this chapter were collected during fieldwork by the author as well as by interviewees and other assistants. They were identified in Southern Ndebele by the interviewees. Scientific identification was done at the H.G.W.J. Schweickerdt Herbarium [PRU], University of Pretoria. The scientific names adopted mostly follow the practices of the South African National Biodiversity Institute. Extracts of interviews are available on a DVD deposited in the Special Collections section, University of Pretoria Library.

The species are arranged alphabetically according to scientific name. The family name appears in capital letters on the same line as the scientific name. The Southern Ndebele vernacular name is given on the next line. Some vernacular names include slang words and these are given in square brackets [ ]. Then follows the record of the uses and significance of the plant. Different uses recorded for the same species in different localities are listed separately so as to preserve regional differences in common names and cultural practices. The locality where the voucher specimen was collected and its collecting number are given on the last line of the treatment.

The focus is mainly on woody plants, most of which are native to South Africa. A few alien species of cultural importance have been identified and are also listed. An asterisk (*) preceding a scientific name denotes an alien species. Shrubs and some herbaceous healing plants have also been included, although some could not be scientifically identified to species level. A list of all Southern Ndebele terms/words used in this report is supplied in Appendix 2 to clarify and explain their meaning. All plants recorded during the study are listed alphabetically according to common name in Appendix 3. A short list of Southern Ndebele names that could not be linked to a scientific name is attached as Appendix 4.

4.2 Plants recorded

Acacia caffra (Thunb.) Willd. MIMOSACEAE

umthodlwana

The bark and root are mixed to prepare a concoction called *amarherhetjha*, which is used for treating pains, headache, body ailments and various diseases. The Southern Ndebele distinguish this tree from its close relative *umtholo*. *Umthodlwana* literally means 'the lesser *umtholo*' – it is slightly smaller than its bigger relative. As in the case of *umtholo*, the Southern Ndebele used the wood to make yokes for cattle and axles for ox-wagons. The wood was thought to be strong and resilient enough to carry the wagons.

Locality: Wolwekraal **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 117*

Acacia caffra (Thunb.) Willd. MIMOSACEAE

umthoro

The inside of the bark is peeled off to expose fibre, which is woven into ropes used by women to tighten bundles of firewood. The ropes are also used to tighten thatch-roof poles and for many other household chores. The stem is used mainly to make axles for ox-wagons. The root and bark are often used in the mixture for *amarherhetjha* and drunk together with other mixtures to treat pain and stomach ailments. It is also used as firewood.

Locality: Mdala Nature Reserve **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 31*

Acacia caffra (Thunb.) Willd. MIMOSACEAE

umtholo

Roots are often included in *amarherhetjha* and drunk together with other mixtures to treat pain and stomach ailments. Like related species, the woody stem is used to make yokes for cattle and axles for ox-wagons.

Locality: Wolwekraal **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 55*

Acacia karroo Hayne MIMOSACEAE

umsasana

The pods are collected, dried and fed to goats, especially during the dry season when there is little grass for grazing. The plant also produces a sweet gum enjoyed by many in the community. The bark is peeled off to expose fibre, which is woven into ropes used mainly by women to tie bundles of firewood as well by men to tighten the axles of ox-wagons. As in the case of *umtholo*, the trunks are also used to make yokes for cattle and axles for the wagons because of the resilience and strength of the wood. The wood is also useful as firewood.

Locality: Wolwekraal **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 03*

Acacia karroo Hayne MIMOSACEAE

umrhohlo

Roots are mixed in a concoction to prepare *amarherhetjha*. The bark is peeled off, heated, strapped and wrapped around a wound or sore to speed up the treatment. Because the bark is so strong and resilient, its fibre is also woven into ropes.

Locality: Wolwekraal **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 04*

Acacia mearnsii De Wild. MIMOSACEAE

umtshidiri

Bark is said to be used to discipline a troublesome individual in a village by burning it and then requiring the upset person to inhale the smoke. It is believed that the smoke winds the person down, restoring calm and sense. The trunks and branches are used for building huts, in carpentry and as firewood.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 63*

Acacia mellifera (Vahl) Benth. subsp. ***detinens*** (Burch.) Brenan MIMOSACEAE

umnghwabhani

Bark, root and thorns are mixed and blended with those of *umsasana* and *umkhambi*. This concoction is said to be used to protect a homestead against witchcraft and bad omens. The thorny branches are cut and made into fencing to protect maize fields against livestock. The plant is used mainly as firewood.

Locality: Kameelrivier **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 32*

Acacia robusta Burch. subsp. ***robusta*** MIMOSACEAE

***umunga* [*umonga*]**

The tree is known for its ability to produce gum in large quantities. The gum is tasty and a good source of energy, especially for cattle herders who savour it. Dried pieces are particularly popular and keep herders going during the day. Bark is peeled off to produce wool or fibre, which is used to make rope. Women use the ropes to tighten loads of firewood that they collect and also to tighten the axles of ox-wagons. The fibre is called *incoza*. The root is eaten, though sour; it is chewed as it is thought to be a good medicine for preventing or treating various ailments such as flu and headache. It is also used as firewood.

The plant is believed to produce a healing ash eaten mostly by women. They take it for many purposes, but notably as a good way of internal cleansing. The tree serves as a host for a hemiparasitic plant called *inovu* (mistletoe), which produces fruit with a glue-like substance used mainly by local hunters to catch birds; the fruits are green outside and white inside. They knead the sticky substance together and then put it in birds' nests, unnoticed. When a bird sits on it, it immediately becomes stuck, with wings and legs entangled in the substance and without any chance of escape before the hunter arrives. The tree also serves as a host for another mistletoe called *isanovana*, which is related to *inovu*. Like *inovu*, it also grows as a hemiparasite in the canopy of trees. Unlike *inovu*, however, the fruits are red outside and yellow inside.

Locality: Wolwekraal **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 01*

Acacia sp. MIMOSACEAE

umkhambi

The strong, resilient woody trunks are used for yokes for cattle and axles for ox-wagons. The thorns are used together with other mixtures as a concoction to protect a homestead against witches and bad omens. The plant is also used for firewood.

Locality: Mdala Nature Reserve **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 30*

Afrocanthium gilfillanii (N.E.Br.) Lantz RUBIACEAE

isarudzwana

There are no specific uses listed for this plant, other than its use as tinder and firewood.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 57*

Aloe greatheadii Schönland var. ***davyana*** (Schönland) Glen & D.S.Hardy ASPHODELACEAE

umaroba zibkhali

The outer layer of the leaf is heated and wrapped around a wound, sore or swollen area for healing. The wrap is said to let a wound discharge faster, thus speeding up treatment. The leaf is burnt and wrapped around a painful knee or ankle or around sore/swollen feet. The inside or jelly-like pulp is used as a softener for wounds and for cleaning sores, rushes and injuries. It is often boiled and administered for treating internal pain or ailments.

Locality: Mdala Nature Reserve **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 36*

Aloe marlothii A.Berger subsp. ***marlothii*** ASPHODELACEAE

ikghopha

The outer layer of the fleshy leaf or the bark is cooked or boiled and drunk like *aalwyn* or Cape aloes as a skin cleanser, for pimples, stomach ailments and for pain. In the past, elderly men used the strong, dried leaves with their thorny surface to soften hides, especially cow hides later to be used for ropes and sleeping mats. They called it *ikuhlo* because of its ability to scrub properly. The outer surface is burnt and wrapped around an injured area to treat a wound, swelling or sores. The leaf is cut, boiled in water and administered as treatment for sick domestic animals. This is said to have been one of the most common and successful ways of treating sick animals, especially cattle, goats and sheep.

Locality: Mdala Nature Reserve **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 27*

Ancylobotrys capensis (Oliv.) Pichon APOCYNACEAE

amarabhu

Fruits are edible, sweet and tasty. Roots are mixed in *amarherhetjha* and used to treat various ailments such as pain, headache and a sore throat.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 64*

Artemisia afra Jacq. ex Willd. var. ***afra*** ASTERACEAE

inghana

The plant is dried and boiled to treat colds and flu. Seeds (old flower heads) are dried, burnt and inhaled to treat headache and chest pain. Roots are often dried and used as inhalation to treat colds and flu or boiled into a drink to treat pains and coughs.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 122*

Berchemia zeyheri (Sond.) Grubov RHAMNACEAE

imboyi

Branches are used to make sticks and knobkerries believed to be strong because of the strength and resilience of the tree itself. For this reason, young Southern Ndebele men used to carve knobkerries from these branches to have an advantage that allowed them to fight unfailingly, repeatedly and successfully. The wood is said to be good for furniture and other domestic utensils. The root and bark are used in *amarherhetjha*. The fruit are consumed when ripe and are sometimes mixed and eaten with porridge.

Locality: Matombu **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 95*

Boscia foetida *Schinz* subsp. ***foetida*** CAPPARACEAE

umpipi

The bark and root are used in combination with other herbs as an aphrodisiac. It is drunk with other mixtures or taken alone for the same purpose. Root and bark are also collected, dried and combined with other herbs to increase fertility in women. The mixture is also used to treat sexually contracted diseases. The soft fruits are tasty, edible when fresh.

Locality: Kameelrivier **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 34*

Burkea africana Hook. CAESALPINIACEAE

umnondo

The name *umnondo* refers to the caterpillars found on the *Burkea africana* tree. It serves as host for these caterpillars, called *inondo*. The *inondo* are collected by locals, cooked or fried and eaten as a relish or delicacy. Locals are encouraged not to cut down the tree for firewood or any other purpose because of its importance as a source of food. The *inondo* are sometimes harvested in large quantities and sold as delicacies at local markets. There is a belief that the *inondo* contain high qualities of an aphrodisiac that helps to boost sexual performance, especially in men.

Locality: Wolwekraal **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 18*

Celtis africana Burm.f. CELTIDACEAE

unokorwana

Branches are cut off and used to make fighting sticks for boys. The fruits are also edible and consumed mainly by cattle herders while looking after livestock.

Locality: Mdala Nature Reserve **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 22*

Cephalaria decurrens (Thunb.) Roem. & Schult. DIPSACACEAE

indibulo

Root, bark and leaves are boiled and drunk to treat stomach ailments, pain and other body aches. The drink is taken as *imbiza* which could also be used as a purgative or emetic to get rid of bile and for cleaning the stomach. The root, bark and leaves are often burnt and inhaled as the smoke is said to treat headache, chest pain and other body pains. Furthermore, the root and bark are used as a mixture for *amarherhetjha*.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 96*

****Cereus jamacaru*** DC. CACTACEAE

imandla

Many people use the plant to protect their homestead against witches and bad omens. The thorns are often used in combination with those of *Acacia* species, tightened around the entrance of a homestead with the hope of deterring witchcraft and bad spirits. In many instances, it is planted at the entrance of a homestead for the same purpose.

Locality: Wolwekraal **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 39*

Clematis brachiata Thunb. RANUNCULACEAE

umdladlathi

The bark is collected, boiled or cooked and used as a treatment for flu, colds and coughs. The combination of bark and root is burnt and inhaled to treat headache, pain and other body ailments. The root and bark are combined with other mixtures to prepare *amarherhetjha* used for purging and cleaning the stomach.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 62*

Combretum apiculatum Sond. subsp. ***apiculatum*** COMBRETACEAE

***umsinjana* [*usinjana*]**

The tree is mainly used for firewood. Coals produced from it are said to be long-lasting and are recommended as a reliable source of energy in winter. The root is sometimes used in other mixtures and is inhaled as smoke to treat body ailments and pains. Poles from this tree are often used for fencing around homesteads and cultivated fields.

Locality: Kameelrivier **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 20*

Combretum erythrophyllum (Burch.) Sond. COMBRETACEAE

umdubi

It is widely abundant along river banks and grows tall, with thick stems and green leaves, even in winter. It never loses all its leaves in winter and seems to have the ability to store water because it does not dry up like other trees in the vicinity.

The root and bark are used in the mixture for *amarherhetjha* and drunk as medicine to treat stomach and chest pain. The tree provides good shade for herd boys on hot sunny days. Owing to its size and dense, leafy canopy, the tree is also used by cattle herders as shelter against rain and wind.

Locality: Kameelrivier **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 26*

Combretum hereroense Schinz. COMBRETACEAE

***umuthi wetiye* [*uncaluko*]**

Uncaluko means ‘tea’. A tea is made from the fruit. Furthermore, the bark is used as protection against bad omens and is used mainly by women mourning the death of a husband. Bark will be given to a mourning woman to chew on certain days for the duration of the mourning period. The root is an ingredient of *amarherhetjha*. The tree is also used as firewood.

Locality: Mdala Nature Reserve **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 23*

Combretum zeyheri Sond. COMBRETACEAE

uvece

The bark and root are mixed with other herbs as ingredients of *amarherhetjha*. Furthermore, the bark and root are either burnt and inhaled as smoke to treat various body pains or boiled and administered for the same purpose. The plant is used as firewood.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 45*

Crossandra greenstockii S.Moore ACANTHACEAE

amaboni

The root is mixed with other herbs to prepare *amarherhetjha*. Like *inumba* and *amarebulana*, it is used to treat sore, swollen and painful feet. Roots are boiled and sometimes mixed with *inumba* and *amarebulana*; swollen feet of the sick individual are soaked in this water as part of the treatment.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 94*

Croton gratissimus Burch. var. ***gratissimus*** EUPHORBIACEAE

umwuluka

The plant is used for charm and luck. Bark, root and leaves are ground and mixed with goat fat. This mixture is used as a lotion with the belief that luck would favour the user during hunting or when looking for a job. Hunters, in particular, cut the bark, grind it together with the leaves and spray it around the snaring area, hoping that luck would be with them and that they would catch one, if not a few, game animals.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 70*

Croton gratissimus Burch. var. ***gratissimus*** EUPHORBIACEAE

***umbiza* [*imbiza*]**

Leaves are burnt and the smoke is considered a lucky charm. The root and bark are usually ground and added to bath water as a lucky charm for the whole body. It is also believed that the charm could be used to woo and entice customers closer to one's business. Before going to sell any product, the owner could burn some leaves and splash the smoke around the products, thus bringing luck to the business. Similarly, if one uses it as firewood at home, it is believed that your home would be more likely to have constant visitors thought to be wooed by the lucky charm or smoke form the burnt wood.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 77*

Cussonia paniculata Eckl. & Zeyh. ARALIACEAE

umsenge

The bark and root are boiled and used as an emetic or purgative, called *ukugabha*, thus reducing bile in the stomach and at the same time cleaning the throat and stomach. The leaves and bark are eaten by *mopane*-like caterpillars (larvae of a moth of the Saturniidae) called *amacimbi*. These caterpillars are often collected and eaten as delicacies. The root and bark are also used for treating wounds and swelling through a process known as *ukuthoba*. The root and bark are further prepared as a drink made specifically for widows and widowers to drink during mourning and the cleansing period. It is said to help them heal emotionally and be treated for any ailments and pains arising from the loss of their spouse.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 60*

Cussonia spicata Thumb. ARALIACEAE

umaphaguri

The bark and root are boiled and used as an emetic or purgative, called *ukugabha*, thus reducing bile in the stomach and at the same time cleaning the throat and stomach. Leaves and bark are eaten by *mopane*-like caterpillars (larvae of a moth of the Saturniidae) called *amacimbi*. These caterpillars are often collected and eaten as delicacies. The root and bark are also used for treating wounds and swelling through a process known as *ukuthoba*. The root and bark are further prepared as a drink made specifically for widows and widowers to drink during mourning and the cleansing period. It is said to help them heal emotionally and be treated for any ailments and pains arising from the loss of their spouse.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 131*

Cydonia oblonga Mill. ROSACEAE

ikwipiri

Fruits of this plant are eaten fresh by everybody, but are mostly used to make jam. Men cut the branches and use them as whipping sticks for young men to fight with during the traditional initiation of boys, *ingoma*, or Southern Ndebele male initiation period. These branches are cut, dried and then oiled to be ready for use. The root is used in the mixture for *amarherhetjha*. The tree is also used as firewood.

Locality: Ezithobeni **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 129*

Dichrostachys cinerea (L.) Wight & Arn. MIMOSACEAE

umqathuva/umqorholo

The stem is strong and flexible. It is used to make knobkerries, artefacts and also axles for ox-wagons. Poles from this tree are used for fencing around the homestead, cultivated fields and food gardens as they are strong, not easy to break and are not prone to rotting. The wood is used for carving ornaments, furniture and many household utensils. The plant is used as tinder and firewood.

Locality: Wolwekraal **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 06*

Diplorhynchus condylocarpon (Müll.Arg.) Pichon APOCYNACEAE

umvamase

The plant produces milky latex, hence the Southern Ndebele name meaning 'producer of milk'. Bark and root are mixed with other herbs to prepare *amarherhetjha*. Roots are boiled and administered to relieve pain and ailments. The fruits have a salty taste and are fed to domestic animals as fodder.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 75*

Dombeya rotundifolia (Hochst.) Planch. var. ***rotundifolia*** PENTAPETACEAE

umuwani/umrhuwa

Older men collect the bark from this plant, clean and prepare it into a chew that is given to young boys, called *abesegwabo*, before going to the initiation school. It is believed to be containing an ingredient or juicy latex that cleans the voice boxes and therefore enable

them to sing well. The fruits are also edible, eaten mainly by cattle herders as a diet to ward off a hungry stomach during the day when looking after cattle. The wood is often used to make wooden cooking spoons and other artefacts. It is also used for firewood.
Locality: Wolwekraal **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 17*

Dovyalis zeyheri (Sond.) Warb. FLACOURTIACEAE
umdlharhari
There is a belief among Southern Ndebele that during a ceremony of any kind, once the wood starts burning, people in that family have to ensure that it does not burn out completely as this wood is believed to be the one that keeps the fire burning. At the end of a cooking session it should therefore be kept so that it can be used again the next time the fire is lit. They would burn the same wood and remove it from the fire at night and then burn it again when a new fire is started the following day. Because of this slow burning, the plant is often used as protection of a homestead against witchcraft and evil spirits.
Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 106*

Ehretia rigida (Thunb.) Druce subsp. ***nervifolia*** Retief & A.E.van Wyk BORAGINACEAE
amaqulo
The root and bark are used in a mixture for *amarherhetjha* to treat chest pain and body ailments. They are inhaled as smoke after being burnt or are drunk as a herbal medicine. The fruits are tasty when ripe and are eaten as a snack, especially by cattle herders because they are sweet and tasty and provide energy. The plant is also used as tinder and firewood.
Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 87*

Elaeodendron transvaalense (Burtt Davy) R.H.Archer CELASTRACEAE
umnamane/umdliwa
Fruits are edible and enjoyed by humans. In the olden days, cattle herders ate the sweet juicy fruits as an energy supplement while looking after cattle in the wild. The root and bark are collected, dried and mixed with *amarherhetjha* which are mostly burnt and inhaled as smoke to treat pain, headache and various ailments. They are also drunk to clean the stomach. The leaves are boiled and the infusion is used to treat sores in the mouth and a sore throat. The plant is also used as firewood.
Locality: Kameelrivier **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 40*

Elephantorrhiza burkei Benth. MIMOSACEAE
intolwane encane
The root is boiled and the infusion is used for purging to excrete or reduce bile levels in the body. Stems are burnt and inhaled to relieve pain and also for cleansing. The root could also be boiled and the infusion used as a healing medicine. Leaves are boiled and used for bathing, to give strength to the body and to fight off bad omens. The plant is used as tinder and firewood
Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 47*

Elephantorrhiza elephantina (Burch.) Skeels MIMOSACEAE

intolwane ekulu

The root is edible and mostly liked by porcupines; this would guide hunters to put snares for porcupines around areas dominated by these plants. The root is boiled in small quantities and the infusion is used as an emetic or purgative to excrete or reduce bile levels in the body and also as healing medicine to treat pain and body ailments. Stems are burnt and the smoke is inhaled for relieving pain and also for cleansing. It is a good source of tinder and firewood.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 98*

Englerophytum magalismontanum (Sond.) T.D.Penn. SAPOTACEAE

***umnombela* [*umnumbela*]**

The bark and root are mixed with other herbs to prepare *amarherhetjha*. The fruits are sweet and tasty and are eaten by everyone, in particular cattle herders. The bark is boiled and drunk as a pain reliever. Furthermore, the bark is mixed with other concoctions in *amarherhetjha*, burnt and inhaled as smoke to treat pain, headache, stomach ailments and other body pains.

Locality: Doornkop **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 52*

Erythrina lysistemon Hutch. FABACEAE

umsisi

Part of the bark and root are used in *amarherhetjha* and this is poured in water and drunk to treat body pains and various ailments. This means that only a small quantity is used in any herbal mixture. No reasons were provided as to why small quantities are used; large doses are possibly toxic. The wood from the tree is used mainly to support building structures and also as tinder and firewood.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 65*

**Eucalyptus* cf. *camaldulensis* Dehnh. MYRTACEAE

ublorhomu

The leaves, bark and root are used for treating colds and flu. They are boiled and the infusion is then drunk as tea or they are chewed raw. In the past, older women would crush the leaves and mix with bark to prepare a mixture called *ibhule*, a leafy necklace; this would be mixed with fat and used on younger women at puberty stage. The smell would be so powerful that a boyfriend visiting such a young woman would smell it at a distance and would know exactly where she slept. The tree serves as a windbreak or shield, especially when planted around a homestead. Poles from this tree are often used as timber to build shelters or fencing.

Locality: Middelburg **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 114*

Eucalyptus cinerea F.Muell. MYRTACEAE

ublorhomu

As in the case of *Eucalyptus* cf. *camaldulensis*, the leaves, bark and root are used for treating colds and flu. They are boiled and drunk as tea or they are chewed raw. In the olden days, older women would crush the leaves and mix with bark to prepare a mixture called *ibhule*, a leafy necklace; this would be mixed with fat and used on younger women at puberty stage. The smell would be so powerful that a young man visiting such a young woman would smell it at a distance and would know exactly where she slept.

Locality: Middelburg **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 120*

Euclea natalensis A.DC. EBENACEAE

umhlangula

The root and bark are burnt and inhaled as smoke to treat pain, dizziness and various body ailments. Furthermore, bark and root are also boiled and prepared as a drink for pregnant women. The drink is believed to subdue and protect them against pain and various ailments caused by pregnancy before, during and after birth. It is also taken to treat chest pain and ailments. The plant is used as firewood.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 49*

Euclea undulata Thunb. EBENACEAE

umgweregwere

Cattle herders, mainly boys, eat the sweet fruits to keep them going when herding away from home. The root and bark are taken together with other herbs to treat body pain and various ailments and to clean the stomach. Stems are carved into wooden utensils. The plant is used as tinder and firewood.

Locality: Wolwekraal **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 19*

Euphorbia ingens E.Mey. ex Boiss. EUPHORBIACEAE

umhlohlo

The plant produces milky latex which is used in a very carefully measured dosage to clean the stomach. The substance is regarded very dangerous and requires careful measurement when mixing it. It is regarded not only as dangerous but also as poisonous. Strict instructions have to be followed to ensure a safe dose is taken. The latex is mixed with porridge and eaten as a purgative to clean the stomach.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 91*

Fadogia homblei De Wild. RUBIACEAE

amehlwana wembuzi

The root and bark are used in a mixture for *amarherhetjha*. The root is collected, dried or boiled, and used as an emetic or purgative drink to reduce bile and for cleaning the stomach. The fruits are tasty and edible and popular, particularly among herders.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 99*

Fadogia tetraquetra K.Krause var. ***tetraquetra*** RUBIACEAE

ubthi bembuzana

Seeds and fruits are included in concoctions for *amarherhetjha*. The root and bark are burnt and the smoke is inhaled to treat chest pain and headache. It is also boiled and drunk as a herbal treatment for chest pain and stomach and body ailments.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 66*

Faurea saligna Harv. PROTEACEAE

umdwadwa

The plant is used as firewood. It produces sparks when it burns and keeps a fire going for a long time. People are advised not to shelter under this tree when it rains as it is prone to lightning strikes. Cattle herders are always told to stay away from it, especially when it is raining. There is story claiming that the tree is loved by tree agamas and that the lightning is attracted by these reptiles. When struck, the tree burns, leaving the tree agama dead and without its tongue.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 73*

Ficus burkei (Miq.) Miq. MORACEAE

umkguwa wekhaya

Cattle herders consume the fruits for breakfast before leaving home to look after their cattle, or for lunch as they are tasty and sweet. The root and bark are also used in *amarherhetjha*.

Locality: Kameelrivier **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 42*

Ficus glumosa Delile MORACEAE

ikowani

The bark, leaves and root are used in mixtures of herbal medicines for treating various pains and ailments. The fruits are tasty and sweet and are eaten mainly by cattle herders in the wild while looking after livestock. The plant is also used as firewood.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 78*

Ficus ingens (Miq.) Miq. MORACEAE

umkguwa wentaba

The fruits are edible, tasty and sweet and everybody, including the herd boys, enjoy them as a source of food. Furthermore, the root and bark are mixed in *amarherhetjha* and drunk with this mixture to treat various body ailments.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 68*

Gardenia volkensii K.Schum. RUBIACEAE

umgade wemfene

Root and bark are collected, dried and mixed to treat various ailments and pains. They also are included in *amarherhetjha*. The plant, together with stems and thorns of *Acacia* species,

is used as a shield to protect a homestead against evil and bad omens. Stems are used to make artefacts and other wooden utensils. Otherwise the plant is mainly used for firewood.
Locality: Mdala Nature Reserve **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 13*

Gazania krebsiana Less. ASTERACEAE
urhoboyi
Flower heads are eaten as fruit and are also used in herbal mixtures.
Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 128*

Grewia flava DC. SPARRMANNIACEAE
umredlhana
The wood is used to make sticks used for fighting between Southern Ndebele men during initiation. The plant also provides wood for making knobkerries. The fruits are edible, tasty and sweet, and are enjoyed by cattle herders. The bark produces a strong fibre that is woven to make ropes. Roots are mixed with other herbs to produce medicinal herbs.
Locality: Wolwekraal **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 08*

Grewia monticola Sond. SPARRMANNIACEAE
umredlha
The wood is carved into sticks used for fighting by Southern Ndebele men during initiation. It is also made into knobkerries. The fruits are edible, tasty and sweet, and are enjoyed by herders. The wood is used to make wooden utensils and works of art. Together with root and bark from other trees, the roots are used in herbal remedies.
Locality: Wolwekraal **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 07*

Gymnosporia buxifolia (L.) Szyszyl. CELASTRACEAE
inumba/umahlangwana.
The bark is used as medicine to treat headache. It is dried or burnt and inhaled as smoke. The tree has sharp thorns and the branches are cut and used for fencing yards and small farms. It is also used as firewood. The root and bark are boiled and the infusion is used to treat sore feet, corns or swollen legs. They are also mixed with other concoctions, especially *amaboni*, to produce a treatment for pain, particularly associated with knees and ankles.
Locality: Wolwekraal **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 10*

Gymnosporia tenuispina (Sond.) Szyszyl. CELASTRACEAE
amabutho
Leaves and fruits are usually fed to livestock as fodder. It is believed that when fed of this fodder, livestock tends to breed more and increase in numbers, thus increasing the wealth of the owner. This fodder is also believed to calm the livestock as the animals tend to be more at peace and comfortable with each other rather than fight among themselves, especially cattle and goats.
Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 93*

Gymnosporia tenuispina (Sond.) Szyszyl. CELASTRACEAE

amarebulana

The bark, root and leaves are used for treating people with sore and swollen feet or corns. Sores, corns or swollen feet are soaked in the boiled water, with the aim of instant relief. *Amarebulana* is also mixed with *inumba* and *amaboni* to prepare a healing medicine for painful sores and swollen feet. It is also used in the concoction for *amarherhetjha*.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 89*

Halleria lucida L. SCROPHULARIACEAE

umgabe

The plant is used by young men to make whipping sticks used for fighting during the initiation period. It is also used as firewood.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 83*

Heteromorpha arborescens (Spreng.) Cham. & Schltdl. APIACEAE

umbangandlala

The name of the plant means 'to cause hunger'. It is believed to bring hunger to a home and therefore people are discouraged from taking it from the wild and bringing it home or planting it at home. The branches are cut into sticks that are used to play traditional drums, especially by women. Ironically, it is believed to drum nicely and make wonderful music.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 71*

Hypoxis rigidula Baker HYPOXIDACEAE

***ikofe* [*umandevu*]**

Rhizomes are used as *imbiza* for treating stomach ailments, for cleansing and for relieving body ailments. The plant is boiled and drunk as a purgative or as treatment for chest pain, a sore throat and various stomach ailments. Often mixed with other herbs such as *isgenama* to prepare a concoction for treating sexually transmitted diseases such as syphilis and gonorrhoea. The mixture is also used as an aphrodisiac or sexual boost for men.

Locality: Kameelrivier **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 12*

Ipomoea obscura (L.) Ker Gawl. CONVOLVULACEAE

umrhorha

Stems and tubers are burnt and the smoke is inhaled to treat headache and pain. There is a strong belief in the import role of the plant when communities pray for rain during a drought. For example, it is believed that the *Sodiye* clan living in the Loskop Dam area used the plant successfully during a dry season to ask for rain. Stems are wrapped around the head, particularly by young boys who then, together with older men, go to the river and start sprinkling water using the leaves of the *umsenge* tree, asking the gods and God to bring rain.

They sing a rain song called *mrhorha mdokwana abantwana balambile*, which simply means 'the calling for the plant to respond because kids are hungry, so let there be rain'. Soon thereafter, it is said that rain would start coming down. The successful arrival of the rain is associated with the power of this plant.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 102*

Kalanchoe paniculata Harv. CRASSULACEAE

usineke

The plant is used to treat ear infections. The leaf is either burnt or boiled and then put on the painful or aching ear. The resultant infusion could be used as eardrops for further treatment of the ear.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 113*

Lannea discolor (Sond.) Engl. ANACARDIACEAE

iingwenya zeentdaba

Found predominantly in mountainous areas, the tree provides edible fruit to cattle herders. The fruits are made into a drinkable juice. The root is dug up, dried or boiled and the infusion is used as medicine to treat kidney disorders.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 44*

Lippia javanica (Burm.f.) Spreng. VERBENACEAE

umsuzwane

The plant is highly valued by the Southern Ndebele, particularly during funerals. Leaves are cooked together with the meat that is to be served to the people coming to the funeral. This is believed to play a significant part in cleansing those attending the funeral and to take away bad luck associated with mourning.

Sometimes the leaves are eaten raw with a bite of cooked or fried meat. The leaves are also used as insect repellent, especially against mosquitoes; their aromatic lemon smell is thought to repel the insects. Smoke from the leaves is inhaled directly to treat colds, flu and chest pain. The leaves are also soaked in water, which is then drunk as a herbal treatment for colds and other body ailments.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 108*

Lopholaena coriifolia (Sond.) E.Phillips & C.A.Sm. ASTERACEAE

isanzinyana

The plant is mainly used for firewood. It is regarded as poisonous and many prefer to cut it down in their vicinity or around their yards and destroy or throw it away. This also highlights the name of this tree, which actually means 'darkness'. Many Southern Ndebele believe that anything related to darkness should be discouraged.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 53*

Macledium zeyheri (Sond.) G.Ortiz ASTERACEAE

ihlaba makhondlwana

Seeds and roots are boiled and used to treat painful legs and corns.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 97*

****Melia azedarach*** L. MELIACEAE

usareni

Seeds are strung together and made into necklaces, especially for children. The seeds are sometimes mixed with the ones used for baby necklaces, *utankraal* (*tandekrale* in Afrikaans; **Coix lacryma-jobi*), used to speed up the appearance of a baby's first milk teeth. Babies tend to chew the seeds on the necklace, thus soothing the itching gums and helping the milk teeth to come out. Leaves are fed to livestock, particularly goats.

Locality: Kameelrivier **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 116*

Mundulea sericea (Willd.) A.Chev. subsp. ***sericea*** FABACEAE

umsinda-ndlovu

When burnt, the plant produces noisy sparks. The bark and root are burnt and smoke is inhaled to treat headache and pain. The tree is also used as protection of a homestead by mixing it with other herbs to chase away evil spirits and witches. It is also mixed with other concoctions for protecting people against bad spirits. The bark and root are used in a mixture for *amarherhetjha*. Like *inumba* and *amarebulana*, the plant is used to treat sores, swollen body parts and painful feet.

Locality: Kameelrivier **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 41*

****Musa acuminata*** Colla MUSACEAE

ibhanana

Though this is a cultivated tree, many Southern Ndebele treat it like any other tree. The plant is mainly a source of food; the fruit are eaten ripe and are also made into porridge. The fruit are sometimes dried and eaten later.

Locality: Kameelrivier **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 115*

Myrothamnus flabellifolius Welw. MYROTHAMNACEAE

uvuka

The Southern Ndebele call this plant *uvuka kwabafileko*, meaning 'one who wakes up from the dead' or simply 'resurrection' because of its resurrection abilities. They use the leaves and root in bath water. Bark, leaves and root are boiled and drunk as a lucky charm.

Because of the ability of the plant to revive from seemingly dead leaves as well as its ability to grow and adapt almost anywhere, it has a significant status in the sense that it brings hope and serves as a source of inspiration in people's lives. It is therefore also used as a concoction to prepare *amarherhetjha*. The root and bark are burnt and the smoke is inhaled to ease pain and to treat chest ailments, headache and dizziness.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 105*

Myrothamnus flabellifolius Welw. MYROTHAMNACEAE

unomadwadlana

The plant is boiled and used as *imbiza* for stomach ailments and is also drunk to clean the circulatory system, but the drink has a very sour taste.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 69*

Ochna natalitia (Meisn.) Walp. OCHNACEAE

umkuze

Stems have a very soft pith inside and older people carve it to make smoke pipes. It is also used as firewood.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 100*

Ochna pulchra Hook. subsp. ***pulchra*** OCHNACEAE

umkuze

Like those of the *Ochna natalitia*, the stems have a very soft pith inside and older people carve it to make smoke pipes. It is also used as firewood.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 59*

Opuntia ficus-indica (L.) Mill. CACTACEAE

idorofiya

Roots are dried and mixed with other concoctions as medicine to treat stomach pain, various ailments and other body aches. The fruit are sweet and tasty and are eaten by many in the community. Cattle herders harvest it in the wild and eat the fruit as an energy boost. The roots are collected, dried and mixed with other herbs for medicinal purposes related to sexually transmitted diseases such as *syphilis* and *gonorrhoea*.

Locality: Kameelrivier **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 35*

Osyris lanceolata Hochst. & Steud. SANTALACEAE

iphere

Firewood of the plant is believed to make people sleepy, tired or sluggish. During ceremonies or traditional and cultural celebrations, the bark is cut and mixed with cattle dung. The mixture is smeared across the open floor area where people will be sitting and dancing. It is believed that people will be peaceful during the ceremony; without even eating much, many would become tired or sluggish.

People are therefore sometimes encouraged not to use it as firewood at home. Some use the plant as protection against witchcraft, others against bad luck or even at roadblocks to deceive law enforcement officers. Some people wash their bodies using the leaves to clean off bad luck while others use it when seeking employment, hoping that its strength would help to convince employers to appoint them.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 88*

Ozoroa paniculosa (Sond.) R.Fern. & A.Fern. var. ***paniculosa*** ANACARDIACEAE
umqhaqhe
The bark contains resin and is sticky when heated or boiled; it is used on injuries, sores or wounds. The wounded area is smeared with or wrapped in the bark to sterilise it and bring about faster healing. The root and bark are also used in *amarherhetjha*. The tree is used as firewood.
Locality: Kameelrivier **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 15*

Pachystigma pygmaeum Sond. SAPOTACEAE
umrhawu
The plant is regarded as poisonous, especially when eaten by livestock such as goats and cattle. Because of this, the plant is not of any major significant use to the Southern Ndebele, although many would just use it as tinder or firewood.
Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 21*

Pappea capensis Eckl. & Zeyh. SAPINDACEAE
umthaphori
The bark and root are used in a mixture for *amarherhetjha* to treat pain and for cleansing. The fruits are eaten by everyone and are sometimes used to produce a drinkable juice with a sour taste. The juice is drunk as it is to treat sores in the mouth or a sore throat. It is also used as firewood.
Locality: Kameelrivier **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 09*

Parinari capensis Harv. subsp. ***capensis*** CHRYSOBALANACEAE
amaribhidla
Fruits are sweet and tasty and are eaten by humans, particularly herders. The root is also collected and dried to be mixed in a concoction for *amarherhetjha*. The fruits are often used to prepare a drink or beverage that is taken to treat sores, throat infections and many other pains.
Locality: Kameelrivier **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 43*

Parinari capensis Harv. subsp. ***capensis*** CHRYSOBALANACEAE
umkhwina
The plant is used in a mixture that produces *amarherhetjha*. The fruits are tasty and sweet and are eaten by everyone, particularly cattle herders in the wild. The plant is used as tinder and firewood. The fruits are sometimes dried and eaten as such or squeezed in water to make juice or sometimes mixed in porridge.
Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 46*

Pavonia burchellii (DC.) R.A.Dyer MALVACEAE
imbabazane
Roots are used in mixtures for *imbiza*, an infusion used as a purgative. When rubbed on the skin, it causes itchiness and could be very irritating. Leaves are soaked in bath water,

with the hope that the bather would become strong and protected from evil spirits and bad omens. Some use the plant as protection for their homestead.
Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 123*

Peltophorum africanum Sond. CAESALPINIACEAE
umsehla
Both the bark and root are used in the concoction for *amarherhetjha*; smoke is inhaled to clean and relieve pain. Branches are cut and put in the water baths used for washing hands before and after a funeral as a means of removing bad luck for those in mourning and those attending the funeral. The bark and root are boiled and used as a purgative medicine for cleaning the stomach. The plant is used as firewood.
Locality: Kameelrivier **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 28*

****Populus alba*** L. SALICACEAE
upopuliri
Leaves, bark and root are burnt or boiled and drunk or the smoke is inhaled for colds, flu and pain. The smoke is inhaled for headache and chest pain. Wood used as tinder or firewood.
Locality: Doornkop **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 67*

Protea caffra Meisn. subsp. ***caffra*** PROTEACEAE
isiqalaba
The tree is mainly used for firewood; it is said to have resilient charcoal that burn for a long time. The flower heads are regarded as particularly beautiful and young Southern Ndebele girls collect and use them as decoration at weddings. Actually, it is said that the girl to be married has to wear such a flower before being taken away by the bridegroom. The root and bark are also partly dried and used in a mixture for *amarherhetjha*.
Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 51*

Pseudolachnostylis maprouneifolia Pax PHYLLANTHACEAE
umhlahlandlela
Bark is boiled and the infusion drunk as pain reliever. It is mixed with other concoctions such as *amarherhetjha*, burnt and the smoke inhaled to treat pain, headache, stomach ailments and other body pains. Orphaned children are encouraged to inhale it with the hope that it would help to drive away bad omens and spirits around them and clean them.
Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 74*

****Psidium guajava*** L. MYRTACEAE
umgwava/igwava
Fruits are eaten fresh and some are stored in canned bottles and eaten during times of food shortage. Roots are dried and used in a mixture with roots of other trees to prepare herbal medicine for the treatment of kidney disorders. The leaves are sometimes boiled and the infusion is drunk for stomach ache, to clean wounds and to treat pain.
Locality: Kameelrivier **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 92*

Pterocarpus rotundifolius (Sond.) Druce FABACEAE

upopuliri wentaba

Used as a sacred place where the ancestors can be called. Families or individuals would gather under the tree and speak to their ancestors. It is believed to be a powerful link between the living and those who have passed on. It is believed that when someone is in trouble far away from home or even in the wild, that person could just look around for this tree and kneel under it to call the ancestors for help and guidance. Also used as firewood.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 81*

Pygmaeothamnus zeyheri (Sond.) Robyns RUBIACEAE

amaboni

Roots are mixed with other herbs to prepare *amarherhetjha*. Like *inumba* and *amarebulana*, it is used to treat sores and swollen, painful feet. The roots are boiled and sometimes mixed with *inumba* and *amarebulana* to strengthen the concoction. Swollen feet are soaked in this water to treat a sick individual.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 112*

Rhynchosia nitens Benth. ex Harv. FABACEAE

***umhlolokazana* [*umhlolokajana*]**

The name of this plant means 'widow'. Stems are burnt and inhaled as smoke, mainly by widows during and after mourning as part of cleansing. A widow would also drink a concoction prepared from roots of the plant until the mourning period is over. The roots are also mixed with other herbs to prepare *amarherhetjha*.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 107*

Sclerocarya birrea (A.Rich.) Hochst. subsp. ***caffra*** (Sond.) Kokwaro ANACARDIACEAE

umrula

The tree produces sweet-sour fruits that are used to make traditional beer and wine. The beer is said to contain aphrodisiacal ingredients that help to improve sexual activity in men. The beer is also called *umrula*, the name derived from the tree itself. There are two kinds of *umrula*, one producing fruit (female) and the other without fruit and regarded as male. The bark and root of the male tree are collected to prepare a mixture that helps to heal pregnancy ailments and those who cannot have children. The beer is also thought to be good for cleaning the stomach. The leaves are often collected to feed livestock. Roots are mixed with bark from other trees such as *Ximenia caffra* to treat stomach and chest pains. The tree is believed to contain substances that can be used for treating diabetes.

The hard seeds contain tasty nuts inside; the nuts are often harvested and eaten as a delicacy. The fruits are sometimes fed to goats; they eat the outer cover, leaving the seeds behind. The seeds are then collected, harvested and the nuts extracted and eaten. The wood is used for artefacts, while the seeds are strung together and polished to make necklaces.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 25*

Searsia leptodictya (Diels) T.S.Yi, A.J. Mill. & J.Wen. ANACARDIACEAE

***ihlobotjhani* [*umhlobotjhani*]**

Branches are cut off and used to make sticks. The root is collected and combined with other mixtures to prepare purgative medicine for cleaning the stomach and treating various ailments. The tiny fruits are very tasty and zingy and are eaten by everybody.

Locality: Wolwekraal **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 16*

Searsia pentheri (Zahlbr.) Moffett ANACARDIACEAE

***ihlobotjhani* [*umhlobotjhani*]**

The branches are cut off and used to make sticks. The root is dug out and mixed with other herbs to prepare various medicines. The root is sometimes boiled to prepare a purgative or emetic mixture to clean the stomach and treat ailments. The fruits are very tasty and zingy and are eaten by everybody.

Locality: Wolwekraal **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 132*

Searsia pyroides (Burch.) Moffett var. ***pyroides*** ANACARDIACEAE

***umrholida* [*umrholide*]**

The branches are used to make sticks. A stick is put on the fire to peel off the bark. The bark is sometimes peeled off by hand and the stick is then put on the fire to straighten it up if it is not straight enough.

Locality: Wolwekraal **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 56*

Senna italica Mill. CAESALPINIACEAE

uhlwayana

The root is dug out, ground and boiled. This mixture is then drunk as medicine to treat stomach pain, internal sores or other body ailments. The seeds are also mixed or boiled as *imbiza* and drunk to treat skin rashes and sores, though it has a very sour taste. The tree is also used as firewood.

Locality: Wolwekraal **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 02*

Spirostachys africana Sond. EUPHORBIACEAE

umthambothi

The wood is used by local men to produce furniture and ornaments. The branches are cut and made into sticks and walking canes. The inside of the stem (heartwood) is burnt and inhaled as smoke to treat headache and pain.

It is said that people are advised not to use the tree as firewood because it produces lots of smoke that is irritating to the eyes. The bark is carved into tiny decorative squares that are attached to the traditionally beaded necklaces worn by women. An older woman would wear three or more of these squares, symbolising pride and maturity, while a younger woman would wear only a few.

Locality: Wolwekraal **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 33*

Strychnos cocculoides Baker STRYCHNACEAE

umthshirigogo/ugeda

The fruits are very tasty and sweet and are eaten by cattle herders as food supplement while herding in the wild. The fruits are sometimes harvested earlier, before they are ripe, and then stored or buried in grass or sand to ripen.

The juicy pulp is often made into a tasty drink enjoyed by everyone. The roots and bark are mixed with that of other trees to prepare *amarherhetjha*. It is also used as firewood.

Locality: Doornkop **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 54*

Strychnos madagascariensis Poir. STRYCHNACEAE

umgade

The fruits are sweet and tasty and are eaten by everyone, but are particularly enjoyed by cattle herders in the wild. The root and bark are collected and added in a mixture for *amarherhetjha*. It is used as firewood.

Locality: Mdala Nature Reserve **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 24*

Strychnos pungens Soler. STRYCHNACEAE

umthlabhere/ugeda

The other name for this tree is *ugeda*. The fruits are very tasty and sweet but they have to be eaten immediately after opening, as any delay would result in the entire fruit becoming tasteless, especially when exposed to the wind. The fruits are also enjoyed by cattle herders in the wild. The root and bark are mixed with other herbs as medicine to treat pain and other body ailments.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 61*

Terminalia sericea Burch. ex DC. COMBRETACEAE

umhronono

The bark is peeled off and woven into ropes that are used to tie and strengthen mud huts used as shelter. The stems are used for carpentry and as firewood. Roots are collected and mixed with other herbs for medicine.

Locality: Kameelrivier **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 109*

Tetradenia brevispicata (N.E.Br.) Codd LAMIACEAE

intelezi

Leaves, bark and root are used as emetic to remove or reduce bile levels in the body. It is also used as a soap, mainly to chase and scare enemies away. Anyone is allowed to drink it. Actually, in the olden days, a small amount used to be poured into a drink so that everyone could access it, for power and self-belief. When poured into water in large quantities, it slowly turns the water into a sticky substance (gel) that can be smeared on the body or that can be used to wash with so as to access its power and strength.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 84*

Thesium sp. SANTALACEAE

ipila

The plant is said to be the tree of life, hence its name refers partly to life. The bark and root are mixed with *amarherhetjha* or inhaled as smoke to treat pain in the body and for cleansing. The root is edible, sweet and tasty and is enjoyed by everyone, particularly cattle herders.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 130*

Vangueria infausta Burch. subsp. ***infausta*** RUBIACEAE

umvilo

The bark and the root are mixed with other concoctions to produce medicine for treating body pains and ailments. The fruits are sweet and tasty and are eaten by many, including cattle herders in the wild. The roots are dug up and used in herbal mixtures for cleansing the stomach and for helping to improve fertility in women. The mixture is drunk as a medicinal herb to treat sexually transmitted diseases.

Locality: Wolwekraal **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 05*

Vangueria parvifolia Sond. RUBIACEAE

isavidlwana

Unlike *Vangueria infausta*, this species is found mainly in mountainous areas. The fruits are edible, sweet and tasty. Cattle herders boil the fruits in water and eat them as porridge. The root is collected, dried and mixed with those of *Vangueria infausta* to produce medicine that combats infertility in women. The root is also used together with other mixtures to treat sexually contracted diseases. The plant is used as firewood.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 76*

Ximenia caffra Sond. var. ***caffra*** OLACACEAE

***umtsiri* [*umtswiri*]**

Both the bark and root are mixed with other concoctions to prepare medicine. The species has male and female plants. The male plant (particularly the bark and root) is used in a mixture to treat male-related sexually transmitted diseases. It is also used in a mixture to help women who struggle to have children.

The fruits are eaten by everyone and are mostly enjoyed by cattle herders while looking after their animals in the wild. The fruits are sometimes soaked in water to make a sweet-sour juice that is drunk to heal sores in the mouth and throat. The plant is also used as firewood

Locality: Wolwekraal **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 38*

Zanthoxylum capense (Thunb.) Harv. RUTACEAE

umnungwana

The root, leaves and bark are mixed together and burnt or boiled to treat colds, flu and coughs. It is also chewed to treat sores on the gum and in the throat, and for chest pain and other body ailments. It is often mixed with sugar or jam to enhance the healing power. The tree has a citrus flavour and can be used as a multivitamin by people who suffer from loss of appetite due to illness. Such patients are given a leaf, small piece of bark or any other part of the tree to chew. This soon brings back the appetite.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 72*

Ziziphus mucronata Willd. RHAMNACEAE

umkgalo

The bark and root are mixed with other herbs to prepare a medicine for treating stomach ulcers, chest pain and headache. The wood is used for making artefacts and wooden utensils. Fruits, although not very tasty, are eaten by cattle herders as a source of energy. Because of its sharp thorns, the tree is used together with *umkhambi* as a concoction to protect a homestead against witchcraft and evil spirits. It is used as firewood.

Locality: Bankplaas **Voucher:** *V. Skosana 37*

CHAPTER 5

GENERAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 General observations

Most plants listed in the present study are used mainly for medicinal purposes, even though modern medicine is now freely available in various medical centres. To a large extent, many Southern Ndebele still prefer to use traditional medicines prepared from plants in the wild. Many use plants also for cultural, religious and other traditional purposes. Some plants are used for their economic significance and the benefits associated with their usage, while others are used for their environmental significance and the role they play in nature.

5.1.1 Plants used medicinally

Many species listed in the study are mostly used for treating conditions such as pain, headache, sores and swelling of the body. Plants like *amaboni*, *amarebulana* and *imboyi* are essential because of their ability to relieve such ailments. Furthermore, some plants in the study are also used for cleansing and purification of the body, as an aphrodisiac and for boosting sexual performance, and for healing sexually transmitted diseases. Among these are *umhlolokazana*, *umpipi*, *umrula*, *umtsiri* and *umvilo*, to name a few. *Umnungwana* and *ublorhomu* are known for their powers to relieve colds and flu, including coughing, if the bark is boiled and drunk as a tea or chewed or if the vapour is inhaled.

There are plants that are used as a treatment for pregnant women to prevent complications during birth. A mixture from these trees is used to enable women to conceive, especially those who find it difficult to have children. Others are used to brace family homes against bad omens and witchcraft. Examples include *umrula*, *iphere*, *umsuszwane* and *umsehla*.

5.1.2 Cultural, religious and traditional uses

Southern Ndebele still strongly believe in ancestral spirits for help and power. For example, if a person loses the way in the middle of the bush or veld, they should look for *upopuliri wentaba*, then kneel and pray under it to ask for the ancestors' protection and direction. It is believed that the lost person will then eventually find the way back home. Big trees of *umrula* are also used as sites for ancestral prayers.

The Southern Ndebele residents of kwaSodiye (a village farm near Loskop Dam) used to pray and ask for rain using branches of *umrhorha* and *umsenge*. It is said that after praying and requesting rain, it rained on the same day, supporting their belief in using these plants as omens to bring rain.

Some trees are landmarks for initiation sites and are never cut down. Women collecting firewood are not allowed near these areas. Such an area serves as a boundary or demarcation in terms of where firewood should be collected. Symbolic trees such as *umthambhoti*, *umrula*, *umrhonono*, *umkhambi* and *umnghwabhani* are used as landmarks for such purposes.

Due to their great shade or traditional significance, some trees serve as venues for meetings and gatherings. Such trees include *umthambhoti*, *umrula* and *umkguwa wekhaya*. Since they are large and shady, they are considered as perfect places for discussing community issues and finding solutions. These trees also serve as tribal courts and many local issues are discussed and finalised in their shade. Some trees are used as sites for prayers by various local churches. They are sometimes marked to indicate the church that worships underneath them and many are situated along river banks or adjacent areas. Examples are *umdubi*, *umunga* or *umsinjana*.

5.1.3 Environmental significance

Trees such as *ublorhomu* have been planted to act as barriers against strong wind, to protect crops and to prevent soil erosion, the crops yielding food to support many families. Other trees such as *umsehla*, *umkhambi*, *umrhonono* and *umqathuva* are valued for their role as refuge and habitat for various bird and other animal species, while *umnondo* is highly regarded for acting as host for mopane-like caterpillars, an important delicacy for many people. The abundance of birds and other animals provides opportunities for hunting, a good source of venison for locals.

5.1.4 Financial/socio-economic benefits

Some of the trees listed in the study are used to make furniture such as chairs and tables and to produce artefacts, while others are used to make axles for ox-wagons. These trees are highly valued by the Southern Ndebele. Furthermore, there are trees that provide poles for carpentry, for fencing and for constructing cattle kraals. Some are used as building blocks for huts or to produce rope, fibre and wool. Certain trees provide tinder and firewood.

Trees that provide food for survival, also local beer and juice, are *umrhohlo*, *umrula*, *umtshidiri*, *umkhambi*, *umunga*, *umqathuva*, *umtholo*, *umrhonono* and *umredlha*. The fruits of *umnombela* ripen in December and are tasty and enjoyable. Many inhabitants between Middelburg and Loskop Dam sell these fruits to generate income. Around Dr. J.S. Moroka Municipality, women make and sell *marula* beer, a popular drink, especially among men who believe that it acts as an aphrodisiac and as treatment for stomach ailments.

5.2 Harvesting and conservation of plants

The study also considered the impact of harvesting and the traditional way of understanding and utilising these plants by the Southern Ndebele. It also sought to provide insight into the abundance and diversity of the plants and to list the various ways that are used to sustain their existence and survival and to improve conservation practices to manage this natural resource.

5.2.1 Main harvesters

The main harvesters of wild plants are local people/villagers/community members, traditional healers and local farmers. The level of formal education among the people residing in the study area is very low. Most of the older men and women have no formal

schooling or training. Many of the young people drop out of school before finishing high school and this contributes to the problem of illiteracy. In this kind of environment it is often difficult to find people who know and understand the significance of plants and the need for conservation.

Many people would not know if they had just cut down the last remaining tree in a particular area or had just removed a rare or endangered one. The local economy in this area is such that the lack of education, unemployment and poverty, result in many people being unable to buy coupons for electricity on a regular basis and they are forced to resort to firewood. Trees are cut mainly in winter when energy is needed most. Some trees cannot survive and are lost.

Some plants are harvested for medicinal purposes but end up being over-harvested for monetary benefit. The harvesting of *Hypoxis* corms by locals who sell it at a low price to commercial dealers bodes ill for both the species and the communities. Selling these plants at a low cost means that the sellers have to be in the wild constantly to harvest more so as to make more money. This has a significant impact to the survival and continued existence of the plants. People then start harvesting other species, with similar dire consequences. Sustainable development refers to social, economic and environmental factors being equal. It would therefore be essential to grow the local economy to the benefit of local people, but taking into account that such economic development should not be at the expense of the natural environment.

5.2.2 Abundance and diversity

Some of the tree species listed are no longer as abundant in nature as before. The loss is attributed to the massive illegal collecting of firewood by locals as well as clearing for agriculture. Even though electricity is supplied to many areas where the Southern Ndebele live, many people still use firewood as a source of energy. In one area where specimens were collected for the study, there was clear evidence that trees such as species of *Combretum* were severely affected owing to the cutting of firewood. At one stage, it was difficult to find any jacket plum trees, which used to be abundant in the study area. Eventually some jacket plums were found a considerable distance away. Local agriculture also results in clearing, with large areas being prepared for this purpose and many tree species cut down in the process.

5.2.3 Significance for conservation

There are four nature reserves in the study area where the conservation and protection of wild animals and plants are the priorities. Some of the plant species in this study were collected in one of these nature reserves and others along the Loskop Dam Nature Reserve, which is also an important area for conservation. These nature reserves have embarked on an initiative to make inhabitants of neighbouring villages aware of the importance of sustainable harvesting of plants.

5.3 Meaning and affinities of common names

During the recording of information and listing of plants, a number of interesting observations were made. Among the more fascinating was specific information about certain plants and how the doctrine of signatures played an important role. Apart from being guided by the doctrine of signatures, other plants were found to be an inspiration, forming part of daily life for many Southern Ndebele. For example, it was found that *uvuka* (*Myrothamnus flabellifolius*) has the ability to rise and grow from a seemingly dead state; this resurrection is prompting many Southern Ndebele to use it in situations of life and death. The bark and root are given to persons who are sick with the hope that they, like the tree, would rise and recover. The medicine is taken as a drink or inhalation. Simply translated, *uvuka* means 'rise' or 'wake up'.

Furthermore, plants such as *umbangandlala* are thought to be associated with hunger, poverty and famine and may not be brought anywhere nearer a home for fear of falling victim to these associations. Such plants may not even be used as firewood. *Umbangandlala* means 'to cause hunger'. On the other hand, a plant like *umbiza* [*imbiza*] would be embraced because it is associated with luck and prosperity. When burnt, the good smell coming from the smoke is said to be a lucky charm, hence *umbiza* means 'come all.'

The uses and names of some plants are associated with the kind of people at whom their use is aimed, for example the tree called *umhlolokazana*, which means 'a widow'. This plant is used mainly to heal and cleanse widowed women during their mourning period.

Some plant names are borrowed from English, Afrikaans, the Nguni languages or even from the Northern Sotho and Tswana groups. This has been pointed out in the introduction. The Southern Ndebele's association with these groups can be traced back to the time when they first came into contact during their history and transition. Some of these names have very interesting similarities, for example *umkgalo* (*Ziziphus mucronata*) is called the same in Tswana and in Northern Sotho. The association between the groups might have had an influence on the name of this particular plant, hence the similarity.

There is also *umvilo* (*Vangueria infausta*), a name shared with the Xhosa-speaking people. This might also be attributed to earlier times when all the Nguni groups were still together, before they split. The name might have been kept by both groups over a very long time, up to the present day.

One of the surprising similarities is the Southern Ndebele name *umdwadwa* (*Faurea saligna*). It is the same as the name used by the Northern Ndebele of Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwean Northern Ndebele (not to be confused with the Northern Ndebele of South Africa) are thought to have fled with Mzilikazi and went as far as Zimbabwe. It is not clear whether the name *umdwadwa* was retained during the great migration or whether it was borrowed by one of the two groups. Though there was little contact between these groups, there is evidence that points to clashes that occurred between them as they crossed each

other's path. Nevertheless, it is probably because of this contact, shared history and mutual influence that the name *umdwadwa* is still used by both groups today.

There are also common names shared between the Zulu and the Swazi. For example, the name *umnombela* [*umnumbela*] (*Englerophytum magalismontanum*) is used by both the Southern Ndebele and the Swazi. It is well known that the Southern Ndebele claim their earliest origins from KwaZulu-Natal as it is known today, but their connection with the Swazi group is not well documented. However, there is evidence tracing both groups back to KwaZulu-Natal. It is possible that the name might have been retained since those times or that they have exchanged or borrowed from each other during their earlier years when they came into contact with one another.

The Southern Ndebele also borrowed certain plant names from the Indo-European languages, particularly from English or Afrikaans, and especially names of alien plants introduced by colonists. For example, *Eucalyptus* cf. *camaldulensis* (blue gum) is called *ublorhomu* in Southern Ndebele which is almost similar in pronunciation to the English 'blue gum'.

Another name with a foreign influence and in which the foreign origin is still clear, is *Psidium guajava* ('guava' in English) – it is called *igwava* or *umgwava* in Southern Ndebele.

However, it is evident that the Southern Ndebele borrowed more extensively from Afrikaans than from English, indicating that the Ndebele-speaking communities were in close contact with the rural farming people who spoke mainly Afrikaans (Mahlangu 2007). Skhosana (2009) and Mashiyane (2002) maintain that the amaNdebele (i.e. Southern Ndebele-speaking people) borrowed much of their lexical stock from Afrikaans rather than from English (Mahlangu 2007). A plant name derived from Afrikaans is *umthlabhere* (*Strychnos pungens*). The Afrikaans name for this tree ranges from *stekelblaarklapper*, *blouklapper*, *bobbejaanklapper*, *botterklapper* to *grootklapper*. The '*klapper*' part of the name clearly influenced the Southern Ndebele to call the tree *umthlabhere*. The history of contact between the Southern Ndebele and the early Afrikaans- and English-speaking people is well known. This connection might explain why these names that refer to the same plant are so similar in pronunciation.

Some Southern Ndebele plant names are modified into so-called slang names, but they cannot be ignored as the meaning of the slang and the actual name is the same. The slang form may even explain or provide a better understanding of the meaning of the name itself. Such names include *umsinjana* (for *Combretum* species). Southern Ndebele would also call this tree by the name *usinjana* but still meaning the same thing. *Umsinjana* is known for its strong, resilient and lasting charcoal when burnt as firewood. So, if someone describes another as [*usinjana*], it means that the person is described as strong and resilient – it is a compliment more than anything else.

Another example of such a name is *umhlolokazana* (*Rhynchosia nitens*). While many people use *umhlolokazana* to refer to this plant, many others also call it [*umhlolokajana*]; they mean the same. The bark and root of the plant are used to treat and cleanse widowed people. *Umhlolokazana* means 'a widow'.

Some plants are named according to their locality. Examples include *umkguwa wekhaya* (*Ficus burkei*), the name meaning that it is not found in the wild but mainly around villages, and the name *umkguwa wentaba* (*Ficus ingens*), which means 'mountain fig' as it is found mainly in rocky or mountainous areas.

There is also *Myrothamnus flabellifolius*, known as *unomadwadlana* in Southern Ndebele. The name means 'the one that grows in rocky areas', indicating that to find this plant one has to look around rocky places, further implying that the name is determined by the location of the plant. The tree name *umnghwabhani* (*Acacia mellifera*), means 'hook and tear', so called because of its hooked thorns renowned for their ability to inflict painful scratches.

Furthermore, there are plants named according to structural characteristics, yet they are the same or maybe belong to the same family. For example, *Vangueria infausta*, which is called *umvilo* in Southern Ndebele, is characterised by its larger appearance compared to the related *Vangueria parvifolia*, which is known as *isavidlwana*, meaning 'small vangueria'. It is not only the structural difference that is evident but the fruits also differ in size. *Vangueria infausta* (*umvilo*) has larger fruits compared to those of *Vangueria parvifolia* (*isavidlwana*). Another example is that between *umtholo* and *umthodlwana*. *Umtholo* is the bigger one, whereas *umthodlwana* refers to the smaller one, yet both are applied to *Acacia caffra*.

Other plants are named by what they offer in terms of services or food. For example, *Combretum hereroense* is called *uncaluko/umuthi wetiye* ('tree tea') in Southern Ndebele, because of its winged fruit that are used to make an enjoyable tea. Another plant in this category is the *ikwipiri* (from the Afrikaans *kweper* for the quince, *Cydonia oblonga*) as it is called in Southern Ndebele because it provides sticks, called *amakwipiri*, that are used in stick fighting before and during the time when young Southern Ndebele men undergo initiation rites known as *ukuwela*.

There are plants mentioned in the this study that have been used to name places where many Southern Ndebele reside today. This occurred either as a result of the plant being abundant in the area or by accident. However, judging by the trend according to which these areas have been named, the latter seems more likely. Places such as *emRhononweni* (*Terminalia sericea*), *emThambothini* (*Spirostachys africana*) and *emaTshirini* (*Ximenia caffra*) stand out among those that are named after plants occurring in that area. Some plant names are used to derive names for people, for example, *umsehla* (*Peltophorum africanum*), *amabutho* (*Gymnosporia tenuispina*) and *umsasana* (*Acacia karroo*). Names such as *umtholo* (*Acacia caffra*) and many others are used to name shops, institutions and even streets.

The present study also recorded some uniquely Southern Ndebele plant names that are apparently not related to other groups or languages. This is noteworthy in the sense that these names could be regarded as original and the Southern Ndebele could claim a sense of ownership. It furthermore suggests that there are plant names that were independently coined and retained by the Southern Ndebele without influence from other groups in southern Africa. Examples are: *isanzinyana*, *ihlobotshani*, *uhlwayana*, *umaphaguri*, *umrholide*, *unokorwana*, *isarudzwana*, *umtshidiri*, [*umhlolokajana*], *umdtlarhari* and *ugeda*.

During the era of the former homeland government, each tribal office used to appoint watchmen specifically to ensure that, among other things, those who cut down trees or removed plants illegally, were brought to book. This was done to protect and preserve the plants and was a successful way of conserving plant species. Plants such as *umbangandlala* are said not be brought home, another way of protecting and preserving them. Plants such as *umrhorha* are said to be used mainly by older men and small boys when praying for rain. This might be a deliberate arrangement to protect the plants from being over-harvested since young boys do not go into the veld on their own to cut firewood while older men often do not have the strength to cut down a large number of plants.

There were places where women were not allowed to collect firewood, for example near initiation sites. This preserved many plants around such areas and protected their existence. There are also plants that were not supposed to be used as firewood. They were said to be producing bad smoke and so on, but this ban would preserve and protect the plants.

SUMMARY

There is a strong link and interaction between the Southern Ndebele and the plants growing around them. Protection and preservation of these species for their usefulness and aesthetic value have characterised this interaction over the years. As the recording of plants in Southern Ndebele or the *isiNdebele* language has never been formally done, the present study seeks to provide a foundation for the recording and listing of plant names in Southern Ndebele.

Plants recorded in the study played and still play an important role in the lives of many Southern Ndebele. At present, part of the knowledge on and names of these plants lies with the older generation. It was noticed that younger people today do not fully embrace the traditional practices and ways of interacting with many of these plants previously followed by the Southern Ndebele. Many young people not only neglect some of the traditional and ancient ways of symbiosis with these plants, but also detach themselves from the beliefs and the way the Southern Ndebele generally valued these plants in the past.

With current trends, it is possible that if the Southern Ndebele do not record and list these plants and their associated indigenous knowledge, it could be lost forever. Recording the plants was an essential first step on which further work could be based. Some plant names have been used to name places where many Southern Ndebele live. Other names describe the locality or habitat of the plant itself, while others are used to praise and revive the fallen spirits.

For the younger generation, the present study shows that plants could play a significant role in building the economy and in treating various diseases. For example, based on the uses of *umrula* as listed in the study, the youth could further exploit these uses to the economic benefit of the Southern Ndebele. Some plants are believed to possess healing powers, especially those that can treat sexually transmitted diseases. With the spreading of the HIV and AIDS pandemic in this country, Southern Ndebele could also play an important role by contributing knowledge to guide research on the properties of some of the plants.

Other uses of plants form part of the daily life of many Southern Ndebele, for example the need for firewood. There are plants associated with the production of good charcoal that lasts relatively longer when burnt, for example *umsinjana*, *isiqalaba* and *umdwadwa*. This could be further economically exploited to produce sustainable charcoal, thus contributing to the local economy of the region.

The study revealed that some common names of plants are regionalised while others are localised; some plant names differ regionally, yet they refer to one and the same species. For example, in the Middelburg area, *Gymnosporia buxifolia* is called *inumba* in Southern Ndebele while in the Dr. J.S. Moroka area it is called *umahlangwana*. This highlighted the existence of cultural diversity and a constant need to conserve and preserve these plants and

the associated local knowledge. The study further showed that apart from all these perceptions about the values and uses attached to the plants, it is true that the Southern Ndebele have benefited and are still benefiting from these plants. All the uses are valuable and significant in a particular way. For instance, the environmental, cultural, religious and traditional significance of these plants remains at the core of many cultural beliefs and customs of the Southern Ndebele.

The information provided by the present study is almost certainly not sufficient to cover all known plant names and their significance to the Southern Ndebele. However, it is hoped that it would go some way in encouraging other researchers to expand on the subject. Many of the uses and claims have not been scientifically proven. However, the traditional knowledge provided by knowledgeable elders who are familiar with and understand these plants, is highly respected. This traditional and local knowledge should be recognised and recorded before it is lost.

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My children, Desmond and Zinhle, for having inspired me to continue doing more and dedicating valuable time to complete the study. They are part of a future on which this study, I sincerely hope, will have a positive impact.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Vusi Jackson Skosana was born on 26 November 1974. At the time, his parents, Ntata Junior Kekana and Saliwe Solomon Skosana, lived in a small village farm outside Middelburg in Mpumalanga Province. The family later moved to Kameelrivier 'A' in the former homeland of KwaNdebele where Vusi grew up. He attended primary school at Gijamphezeni Combined School in Kameelrivier 'A'.

He then went to Intuthuko High School in the neighbouring village of Maphotla where he did Standard 6 and 7 and part of Standard 8, completing Standard 8 and 9 at the newly built Sivumelene High School in Kameelrivier 'A'. He returned to Intuthuko High School for matric.

In 1992, Vusi was appointed as student ranger by the Department of Agriculture and Environmental Affairs of the then KwaNdebele homeland government. The following year, the same Department offered him a bursary to study Nature Conservation at Mangosuthu Technikon. He completed the course in 1995 with distinctions in Plant Studies, Animal Studies, Resources Management and Applied Conservation. By then the KwaNdebele homeland had been reintegrated into South Africa under the newly established Mpumalanga Province.

With his qualification in nature conservation, Vusi was appointed as Nature Conservator by Mpumalanga Provincial Department of Agriculture and Land Affairs, later moving on to work for the Gauteng Provincial Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Environment. He continued his studies and acquired a master's degree in Environmental Management from the University of Free State. At present he is a Deputy Director of Environmental Impact Management in the Department of Environmental Affairs. He has been in this Department for eight years. He also had a four-year stint at the Department of Water Affairs where he was employed as Assistant Director in the Social Impact Assessment unit.

Vusi has two children, Desmond and Zinhle. He likes sport and used to play amateur soccer but later retired, keeping fit through exercising in the gym and road-running. Since 2007 he has successfully run and completed the Comrades Marathon five times in succession.

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APPENDIX 1

NAMES AND BRIEF RÉSUMÉ OF SOURCES CONSULTED

Skosana, Bathandani Frans (Mahlungulwana)
Date of birth: 1949-03-06
Place: Embiza (Ethlagwini), between Groblersdal and Middelburg, Mpumalanga Province
Occupation: Small-scale farmer and traditional healer

Mahlangu, Beibie Kortman (SoThoko)
Date of birth: 1945-06-15
Place: Bloubank farm, outside Monsterlus, Mpumalanga Province
Occupation: Pensioner

Mnguni, Mantswani Johannes
Date of birth: 1969-05-13
Place: Bankplaas, Middelburg, Mpumalanga Province
Occupation: Farm worker

Skosana, Skegulani Anna
Date of birth: 1932-02-09
Place: Bankplaas, Middelburg, Mpumalanga Province
Occupation: Traditional healer

Skosana, Noyenda Johanna (NoAroni)
Date of birth: 1952-04-19
Place: Kliprivier farm, outside Middelburg, Mpumalanga Province
Occupation: Small-scale farmer

Mahlangu, Khungu Simon (Cobra)
Date of birth: 1956-05-02
Place: Hendrina; Mpumalanga Province
Occupation: Small-scale farmer and herder

Skosana, Jas
Date of birth: 1931-01-12
Place: Bankplaas, Middelburg, Mpumalanga Province
Occupation: Traditional healer

APPENDIX 2

THE MEANING OF SOUTHERN NDEBELE NAMES/TERMS USED IN THE STUDY

aalwyn **:** medicinal herbal drink (from species of *Aloe*)
abakhethwa **:** initiates
abaloyi **:** witches
abesegwabo **:** boys ready to go to initiation school
abezimu **:** ancestors
amacimbi **:** caterpillars
amakwipiri **:** fighting sticks
amaNala **:** a Southern Ndebele tribe
amaNdzundza **:** a Southern Ndebele tribe
amarherhetjha **:** cleansing herbs, prepared from a combination of the bark, root and leaves of various trees
ibandla **:** sitting place for men
ibhule **:** leafy necklace
icatjana **:** a hut for newly traditionally wedded couple
ifengwana **:** whistle
ikuhlo **:** traditional scrubbing utensil
ikwipiri **:** a tree; also refers to a fighting stick
imbiza **:** traditional medicine (liquid)
incoza **:** fibre from tree bark
induna **:** headman
ingadla **:** a type of traditional dance by men
ingoma **:** initiation of boys
ingwenyama **:** chief
inkomo zobukhazi **:** cattle used as part of lobola/traditional marriage
inondo **:** caterpillars
inovu **:** a hemiparasitic mistletoe that produces a glue-like latex
intanga **:** stage
inyanga **:** diviner
ipelesi **:** bridesmaid
iphomede **:** a white flag put at the gate of an initiate's home
iqude **:** initiation ceremony (girls)
isanovana **:** like *inovu*, but fruits red outside
isdonodono **:** traditional handmade musical instrument
kwaSodiye **:** farming village near Loskop Dam
lobola **:** traditional marriage
masibuyele emasimini **:** going back to farming
maskandi **:** type of music involving a guitar and dances
mopane **:** caterpillars

Sepedi **:** language spoken by the Northern Sotho (also known as *Sesotho sa Leboa* or Northern Sotho)
ubukhazi **:** traditional marriage practice
ukughabha **:** purging
ukugwala **:** painting
ukuhlaba **:** slaughter
ukukhonga **:** practising initiation songs and poems
ukukotiza **:** bride's term spent at her in-laws
ukuthoba **:** to dress a wound or injured area
ukuthomba **:** the process of going to initiation (girls)
ukuwela **:** the process of going to initiation (boys)
ukuzila **:** to mourn/abstain
umphadu **:** initiate's kraal
umseme **:** traditional mat made from grass
untankraal **:** baby necklace usually with hard fruit of the grass *Coix lacryma-jobi*, used to speed up the appearance of a baby's first milk teeth
uvuka kwabafileko **:** resurrection; or waking up from the dead
uwan **:** traditional dance by women

APPENDIX 3

INVENTORY OF PLANTS USED BY THE SOUTHERN NDEBELE

(in alphabetical order according to common names)

An asterisk (*) denotes an alien species.

Vernacular Name	Botanical Name	Family Name
amaboni	*Crossandra greenstockii*	Acanthaceae
amabutho	*Gymnosporia tenuispina*	Celastraceae
amaqulo	*Ehretia rigida*	Boraginaceae
amarabhu	*Ancylobotrys capensis*	Apocynaceae
amarebulana	*Gymnosporia tenuispina*	Celastraceae
amaribhidla	*Parinari capensis*	Chrysobalanaceae
amehlwana wembuzi	*Fadogia homblei*	Rubiaceae
ibhanana	*Musa acuminata*	Musaceae
idorofiya	**Opuntia ficus-indica*	Cactaceae
igwava	**Psidium guajava*	Myrtaceae
ihlaba makhondlwana	*Macledium zeyheri*	Asteraceae
ihlobotjani	*Searsia leptodictya*	Anacardiaceae
ihlobotjani	*Searsia pentheri*	Anacardiaceae
iingwenya zeentdaba	*Lannea discolor*	Anacardiaceae
ikghopha	*Aloe marlothii*	Asphodelaceae
ikofe	*Hypoxis rigida*	Hypoxidaceae
ikowani	*Ficus glumosa*	Moraceae
ikwipiri	**Cydonia oblonga*	Rosaceae
imandla	**Cereus jamacaru*	Cactaceae
imbabazane	*Pavonia burchellii*	Malvaceae
imbiza	*Croton gratissimus*	Euphorbiaceae
imboyi	*Berchemia zeyheri*	Rhamnaceae
indibulo	*Cephalaria decurrens*	Dipsacaceae
inghana	*Artemisia afra*	Asteraceae
intelezi	*Tetradenia riparia/brevispicata*	Lamiaceae
intolwane ekulu	*Elephantorrhiza elephantina*	Mimosaceae
intolwane encane	*Elephantorrhiza burkei*	Mimosaceae
inumba	*Gymnosporia buxifolia*	Celastraceae
iphere	*Osyris lanceolata*	Santalaceae
ipila	*Thesium* sp.	Santalaceae
isanzinyana	*Lopholaena coriifolia*	Asteraceae
isarudzwana	*Afrocanthium gilfillanii*	Rubiaceae
isavidlwana	*Vangueria parvifolia*	Rubiaceae
isiqalaba	*Protea caffra*	Proteaceae
ublorhomu	**Eucalyptus* cf. *camaldulensis*	Myrtaceae

ublorhomu	**Eucalyptus cinerea*	Myrtaceae
ubthi bembuzana	*Fadogia tetraquetra*	Rubiaceae
ugeda	*Strychnos pungens*	Strychnaceae
uhlwayana	*Senna italica*	Caesalpiniaceae
umahlangwana	*Gymnosporia buxifolia*	Celastraceae
umandevu	*Hypoxis rigida*	Hypoxidaceae
umaphaguri	*Cussonia paniculata*	Araliaceae
umaroba zibkhali	*Aloe* cf. *greatheadii*	Asphodelaceae
umbangandlala	*Heteromorpha arborescens*	Apiaceae
umbiza	*Croton gratissimus*	Euphorbiaceae
umdladlathi	*Clematis brachiata*	Ranunculaceae
umdliwa	*Elaeodendron transvaalense*	Celastraceae
umdtlarhari	*Dovyalis zeyheri*	Flacourtiaceae
umdubi	*Combretum erythrophyllum*	Combretaceae
umdwadwa	*Faurea saligna*	Proteaceae
umgabe	*Halleria lucida*	Scrophulariaceae
umgade	*Strychnos madagascariensis*	Strychnaceae
umgade wemfene	*Gardenia volkensii*	Rubiaceae
umgwava	**Psidium guajava*	Myrtaceae
umgweregwere	*Euclea undulata*	Ebenaceae
umhlahlandlela	*Pseudolachnostylis maprouneifolia*	Phyllanthaceae
umhlangula	*Euclea natalensis*	Ebenaceae
umhlobotjani	*Searsia leptodictya*	Anacardiaceae
umhlobotjani	*Searsia pentheri*	Anacardiaceae
umhlohlo	*Euphorbia ingens*	Euphorbiaceae
umhlolokajana	*Rhynchosia nitens*	Fabaceae
umhlolokazana	*Rhynchosia nitens*	Fabaceae
umhronono	*Terminalia sericea*	Combretaceae
umhwuluka	*Croton gratissimus*	Euphorbiaceae
umkgalo	*Ziziphus mucronata*	Rhamnaceae
umkguwa wekhaya	*Ficus burkei*	Moraceae
umkguwa wentaba	*Ficus ingens*	Moraceae
umkhambi	*Acacia* sp.	Mimosaceae
umkhwina	*Parinari capensis*	Chrysobalanaceae
umkuze	*Ochna natalitia*	Ochnaceae
umkuze	*Ochna pulchra*	Ochnaceae
umnamane	*Elaeodendron transvaalense*	Celastraceae
umnghwabhani	*Acacia mellifera*	Mimosaceae
umnombela	*Englerophytum magalismontanum*	Sapotaceae
umnondo	*Burkea africana*	Caesalpiniaceae
umnumbela	*Englerophytum magalismontanum*	Sapotaceae
umnungwana	*Zanthoxylum capense*	Rutaceae
umonga	*Acacia robusta*	Mimosaceae
umpipi	*Boscia foetida*	Capparaceae
umqathuva	*Dichrostachys cinerea*	Mimosaceae
umqhaqhe	*Ozoroa paniculosa*	Anacardiaceae

umqorholo	*Dichrostachys cinerea*	Mimosaceae
umredlha	*Grewia monticola*	Sparrmanniaceae
umredlhana	*Grewia flava*	Sparrmanniaceae
umrhawu	*Pachystigma pygmaeum*	Sapotaceae
umrhohlo	*Acacia karroo*	Mimosaceae
umrholide	*Searsia pyroides*	Anacardiaceae
umrholidi	*Searsia pyroides*	Anacardiaceae
umrhorha	*Ipomoea obscura*	Convolvulaceae
umrhuwa	*Dombeya rotundifolia*	Pentapetaceae
umrula	*Sclerocarya birrea*	Anacardiaceae
umsasana	*Acacia karroo*	Mimosaceae
umsehla	*Peltophorum africanum*	Caesalpiniaceae
umsenge	*Cussonia spicata*	Araliaceae
umsindandlovu	*Mundulea sericea*	Fabaceae
umsinjana	*Combretum apiculatum*	Combretaceae
umsisi	*Erythrina lysistemon*	Fabaceae
umsuzwane	*Lippia javanica*	Verbenaceae
umthabhori	*Pappea capensis*	Sapindaceae
umthambothi	*Spirostachys africana*	Euphorbiaceae
umthlabhere	*Strychnos pungens*	Strychnaceae
umthodlwana	*Acacia caffra*	Mimosaceae
umtholo	*Acacia caffra*	Mimosaceae
umthoro	*Acacia caffra*	Mimosaceae
umtshidiri	*Acacia mearnsii*	Mimosaceae
umtshirgogo	*Strychnos cocculoides*	Strychnaceae
umtsiri	*Ximenia caffra*	Olacaceae
umtswiri	*Ximenia caffra*	Olacaceae
umunga	*Acacia robusta*	Mimosaceae
umuthi wetiye	*Combretum hereroense*	Combretaceae
umuwani	*Dombeya rotundifolia*	Sterculiaceae
umvamase	*Diplorhynchus condylocarpon*	Apocynaceae
umvilo	*Vangueria infausta*	Rubiaceae
uncaluko	*Combretum hereroense*	Combretaceae
unokorwana	*Celtis africana*	Celtidaceae
unomadwadlana	*Myrothamnus flabellifolius*	Myrothamnaceae
upopuliri wentaba	*Pterocarpus rotundifolius*	Fabaceae
upopuliri	**Populus alba*	Salicaceae
urhoboyi	*Gazania krebsiana*	Asteraceae
usareni	**Melia azedarach*	Meliaceae
usineke	*Kalanchoe paniculata*	Crassulaceae
usinjana	*Combretum apiculatum*	Combretaceae
uvece	*Combretum zeyheri*	Combretaceae
uvuka	*Myrothamnus flabellifolius*	Myrothamnaceae

APPENDIX 4

LIST OF UNIDENTIFIED HEALING PLANTS USED BY THE SOUTHERN NDEBELE

Only a Southern Ndebele name (supplied by interviewees) is available for the plants listed below. Voucher specimens for scientific identification could not be obtained. It is a provisional list in need of further investigation.

amarhodutjha **:** The plant produces fruits that are eaten by everyone, including cattle herders. The root is mixed in a concoction for *amarherhetjha*.

ibhadu **:** The plant is used as medicine, mixed with *ikofe* to prepare *imbiza*, as a purgative for cleaning the stomach.

igosi **:** The underground tubers are tasty. Cattle herders dig them out and eat them as an energy supplement during herding.

ikhowe **:** A mushroom associated with termite nests; it is eaten as a delicacy.

imbila **:** It is used in mixtures with other herbs as a purgative and for cleansing, the mixture known as *imbiza* in Southern Ndebele. The fruits are sweet and tasty and are eaten by everyone. Liked by snakes for its good habitat and hunting ground; caution should be taken when the fruits are picked.

inovu **:** The plant produces glue-like latex used mainly by local hunters to catch birds. They knead the substance through and put it in birds' nests. When a bird sits on it, it immediately becomes stuck, wings and legs entangled in the substance and with no chance of escape before the hunter arrives. The fruits are green outside and white inside.

irhewu **:** The plant is mainly used to treat wounds, as it has a limy texture that helps to clean and dry a wound so that it can heal faster.

isanovana **:** Similar to *inovu*, it also grows as a hemiparasite in the canopy of trees. Unlike *inovu*, the fruits are red outside and yellow inside. It is used mainly by local hunters to catch birds.

isgenama **:** The plant is used as a medicine, mixed with *ikofe* to prepare *imbiza*, which is taken as a purgative to clean the stomach.

iskhwende **:** The root is eaten as an energy supplement.

isrhuqe **:** The fruits and flowers are yellowish and are eaten as an energy supplement mainly by cattle herders.

ithangozana **:** The seeds are sifted carefully and used as a laxative. The plant is thought to be poisonous and dangerous when not used with care. When used in large quantities, it could lead to poisoning or even death. People are always advised not to put it in any medicinal mixtures unless they are sure of the correct dosage. The seeds become poisonous and are therefore dangerous if they are not properly sifted.

ubkhwebezane **:** The fruits are edible and tasty and are enjoyed mostly by cattle herders in the veld.

ubtjhewana **:** Used mainly as tinder and firewood.

ugedeka **:** The plant is known for its sweet and tasty fruits that are eaten by everyone; the fruit shells are yellow outside. Cattle herders eat these fruits as an energy supplement during herding.

uhlanganisa **:** The bark of the plant is used to treat wounds and injuries. It is wrapped or strapped around the wound and causes it to join and heal faster; hence the name *uhlanganisa*, which means 'to join'.

umatsetsana **:** The plant looks like grass and is used mainly to make hats and other artefacts.

umcobosi **:** The plant is used to make traditional grass mats used for sitting and sleeping. The mats are called *umseme*. They are used mainly during ceremonies, mostly during traditional wedding ceremonies.

umubhuru **:** The plant produces sweet, tasty fruits that are eaten by everyone, including cattle herders in the wild. In the olden days, the tree was associated with royalty in the sense that it was thought to be the tree liked by the king, probably because of the delicious fruits favoured by all and perhaps by the king in particular.

umngamanzi **:** The plant is called *umngamanzi* because of its preferred habitat. It is mostly found in rivers, the branches hanging steeply along river banks. The root and bark are mixed with other herbs to prepare *amarherhetjha*.

umthlatswa **:** The fruit are tasty and edible. Cattle herders pick them up and savour them as an energy supplement during herding.

umtshathlo **:** The fruits are red inside and eaten by everyone. They resemble those of *Ximenia caffra*. The roots are included in the mixture for *amarherhetjha*.

usotokolo **:** The plant is used to treat wounds, sores and swollen areas. It is kept wrapped around the affected area until the wound has healed.

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