

CHAPTER 4

PLANTS USED BY THE VHAVENDA

This chapter lists the species identified during the field work undertaken by the author. The identification of most taxa is based on voucher specimens and the scientific names follow Gibbs Russell *et al.* (1985, 1987). In a few cases definitive determination beyond generic level was impossible because of insufficient material.

Species have been grouped according to family. The families are arranged alphabetically, as are the species within each family. Some of the accepted scientific names are followed by one or more recent synonyms. For a more complete synonymy Gibbs Russell *et al.* (1985, 1987) may be consulted. Venda vernacular names are supplied for most of the species.

ACANTHACEAE

1. **Hypoestes aristata** (Vahl) Soland. ex Roem. & Schult. var.

aristata

Mabogo 107

(= *Hypoestes verticillaris* (L. f.) R. Br. ex C.B. Cl.)

Mukuluvhali

Fresh leaves are cooked into a potherb used for relishing porridge. It is commonly used during periods of shortage. It is not a very popular vegetable with most Vhavenda cooks.

AMARANTHACEAE

2. **Amaranthus hybridus L.**

Mabogo 22

Vowa

a. Fresh leaves and tender shoots are cooked into a vegetable side dish called *vowa* which is eaten with porridge. The vegetable can easily and successfully be cooked with pumpkin leaves and flowers as well as with *Corchorus tridens*. When peanuts or marula seed kernels are available, their addition to the vegetable is highly appreciated. b. Leaves are used to test the suitability of a baby's type of food during the first three to four days. If the baby shows symptoms of diarrhoea, it is given soft porridge known as *khongodoli* instead of *ntsú* (liquid food prepared by soaking various types of roots). The baby in this case is given a decoction of boiled leaves. c. More often this plant is dried, burnt and crushed into powder known as *mukango*, which is an ingredient of snuff, but the most popular species for this use is *Amaranthus thunbergii* or *Phytolacca octandra*.

3. Pupalia sp.

Mabogo 148

Maime

The root tuber powder is mixed with other medicines for luck. It is dried and ground into powder and then mixed with the powder of *Pyrenacantha grandiflora*. The mixture is believed to protect a treated person against attacks or provocation by other people, secure a better job opportunity and provide defence in court cases.

ANACARDIACEAE

4. Lannea schweinfurthii (Engl.) Engl.

(= *Lannea stuhlmannii* (Engl.) Engl.)

Mabogo 161

Mulivhadza

- a. The Venda name indicates that the plant is used to make a person forgetful (from: *-livhala* = to forget). In fact it is a fungus associated with the root system of this plant which is obtained and mixed with other magical powders and then used for the purpose. The root of the plant may also be used in other cases, e.g. when family members are made to forget a relative who has just passed away. In this case a decoction of the root bark is mixed with the fungus as well as any root found crossing the grave site during digging. It is given to them to drink and also protects them against a sleeping illness known as *Vhulungwane* (see also *Equisetum ramosissimum*). It is also used to help people forget all unpleasant events. b. Mixed with others, it is used to discourage enemies from doing harm to a person by making them forget and postpone their plans. The fungus is also an ingredient of medicines used for keeping a married woman at home by making her less bothered by her previous social ties. It is similarly used to keep domestic animals from straying when they have been obtained from other areas as well as strengthen their relationship with the ones at their new home.

5. **Ozoroa engleri R. & A. Fernandes**

Mabogo 98

Mudumbula

- a. A decoction of the bark and leaves is used for soaking seeds as a means of treating them before sowing in order to make them resistant to dryness, heat and diseases and to improve the resulting crop. b. The bark decoction is also used as a remedy for venereal diseases. The same decoction, used for preparation of soft porridge, is a medicine for general cleaning for men.

6. **Rhus chirindensis Bak. f.**

Mabogo 108

(= *Rhus legatii* Schnl.)

Muvhadelaphanga

- a. The fruit might be eaten when ripe but it is not very popular. b. The wood is workable and used to carve smaller household utensils. The Venda name shows that it is used for carving wooden knives (from -*Vhadela* = to carve for + -*phanga* = knives).

7. **Rhus lancea L.f.**

Mabogo 11

Mushakaladza

- a. The fruit is eaten when ripe and is preferred mostly by children. b. Fresh leaves are stuffed into a pot and boiled to steam a person suffering from colds, headaches and related fevers. The patient must be wrapped in a blanket to prevent too much steam escaping. After steaming, the patient may drink the decoction of boiled leaves. Leaves are also boiled and the decoction used to bathe a baby suffering from the disease known as *tshifumbu* (related to smallpox). The baby is also washed and/or steamed with the decoction. This treatment is done to develop the symptoms of the disease as well as to heal it. People in areas where the plant does not grow usually collect it far from their homes in order to keep it for future use, even though the leaves would be dry. c. The wood is good for fire and d. for building.

8. **Rhus lucida L.**

Mabogo 74

(= *R. lucida* L. var. *outeniquensis* (Szyszyl.) Schonl.)

(= *R. schlechteri* Diels)

Muthaguthagu

- a. The ripe drupes are eaten raw, sometimes with milk or water. b. The plant is also a source of firewood.

9. **Rhus rogersii** Schonl.

Mabogo 73

(= *Rhus dentata* Thunb.)

Muthasiri

- a. The fruit is eaten when ripe but it is not much sought after because it is too dry.
b. The wood is good for fire and is also sometimes used to build certain structures.

10. **Sclerocarya birrea** (A. Rich.) Hochst. subsp.

Mabogo 1

caffra (Sond.) Kokwaro

(= *S. caffra* Sond.)

Mufula

- a. The fruit is eaten by people of all ages. b. The fruit is also used to make the beer or wine called *mukumbi* which is a fairly potent liquor. c. Seed kernels are extracted and used as cooking fat when pounded into *thanga*. When pounded, cooking oil is generally obtained through heating. This oil can also be used for other purposes besides being used to cook vegetables. Young and old people frequently enjoy cracking the shells to obtain kernels which they like to eat raw. d. An infusion of the bark combined with the bark of *Combretum krausii* is used to support pregnancy. e. It is also used for treating barrenness and illnesses related to fertility. f. A bark infusion is used for colds, headaches, malaria and stomach troubles (e.g. dysentery, indigestion, etc.). g. It is also a treatment for a noisy stomach and related diseases. h. When used to select the sex of an unborn child, a male plant is used for a boy and *vice versa*. i. The powdered bark is an ingredient of medicines used for chronic ulcers suspected to be caused by witchcraft. In this regard it is mixed with the

powdered bark of *Terminalia sericea* and other plants which are easily attacked by wood-borers. The use of this plant for chronic ulcers is related to its capacity to regenerate its bark rapidly when damaged. j. The wood is workable and preferred for carving drums, plates, spoons, milking pails, bowls, mortars, yokes, etc. k. The wood is not particularly good for cooking fire but is preferred for burning articles made from clay, e.g. pots, receptacles, dishes, etc. This tree has been traditionally protected for ages because of its importance as a source of food, beverage, medicine and wood.

ANNONACEAE

11. *Annona senegalensis* Pers.

Mabogo 86

(= *Annona chrysophylla* Harv.)

Muembe

a. The fruit, called *maembe*, is edible when ripe and is much enjoyed by children and adults. b. Powder from the root bark is used as an antidote against snake-bite. c. A decoction of the root is a remedy for venereal diseases when taken with soft porridge as a base. d. It is also used in the treatment of bilharzia, the disease popularly known among the Vhavenda as *tshifunga*. e. The bark is chewed for stomach ache, diarrhoea, and dysentery. f. A cord made from the bark is smeared with magical powders to discourage any opponent or antagonist from harming the user, i.e. it slows down his progress by making him feel less prepared until it is too late. A semiparasitic plant growing on this plant, mixed with other powders, makes the user as well as his homestead more slippery, causing difficulty for anybody who wishes to do harm. g. Roots are a major ingredient of a baby's medicines kept in the clay pot known as *thufhana*, and used for making the baby's soft porridge more medicinal, apart from being nutritional. The medicines also improve the taste and flavour of the baby's food. Some of the other plants included in the above recipe are, to mention but a few, *Salix subserrata*, *Artobotrys monteiroae*, *Maytenus* sp., *Bauhinia galpinii* and *Syzygium guineense*. This plant, in particular, is included to keep the stomach conditions favourable by preventing constipation. It also regulates the upward and downward movement of the still soft fontanelle. h. The soft wood

has been used as a cow-stick during fire-making. i. The bark is a good source of fibre for cordage as well as ox-whips.

12. *Artobotrys monteiroae* Oliv.

Mabogo 90

(= *A. nitidus* Engl.)

Mudzidzi, Munna mutswu

a. Commonly known as *Mudzidzi*, the plant is a source of juicy fruit enjoyed by young people and known as *madzidzi*. The fruit is dark bluish when ripe. The Venda name, *Munnamutswu*, has been given to this plant by traditional medicinal practitioners as a technical name. It refers to the colour of the root bark which is black (hence the name derived from *munna* = man, referring to its power, + *mutswu* = black, referring to its colour). b. The roots are soaked in a clay pot called *thufhana* together with other medicines, and the resulting infusion is used for making soft porridge known as *tshiuza*, which is given to a baby from birth until he/she is able to share food with other family members. The medicine is understood to keep the baby's stomach in good condition as well as cleaning the blood. c. A decoction of boiled roots is used to make soft porridge for older people who suffer from pelvic pains and a troublesome stomach. d. A semiparasitic plant growing on this tree is taken and used magically to trap evildoers, especially ones who visit other people during the night in the form of *tokoloshi*. Once trapped, the familiar must be taken to the traditional practitioner who arranged for its trapping. He will then use it to make medicines to prevent similar cases in the same or another homestead. Medicine collectors say that it is great luck to find the semiparasitic plant, and that if someone is lucky enough to get it at the beginning of his search for medicines, he will then be able to get all the others, i.e. it will help him see all the others. e. The flexible saplings are used in building, especially for the construction of roofs as withies as well as for holding the thatch. It is also preferred for pole walls called *mipfunda*, built to protect courtyards against winds and to secure privacy.

13. **Hexalobus monopetalus** (A. Rich.) Engl. & Diels
(= *H. glabrescens* Hutch. & Dalz. ex Burtt Davy)
Muhuhuma

Mabogo 137

- a. The juicy fruit is eaten, preferably by herdboys and wood collectors who frequently visit the mountainous areas. b. The wood is recommended as a good source of fire for cooking as well as for heating.

14. **Xylopia odoratissima** Welw. ex Oliv.
(= *X. antunesii* Engl. & Diels)
Muvhulavhusiku

Mabogo 147

The Venda name relates to the fact that the plant is superficially similar to *Muvhula* (*Parinari curatellifolia* subsp. *mobola*). The powdered root is sprinkled over soft porridge or mageu (a slightly fermented bran) and then taken as a remedy for stomach pains, the cause of which is suspected to be witchcraft.

APIACEAE (UMBELLIFERAE)

15. **Heteromorpha trifoliata** (Wendl.) Eckl. & Zeyh.
(= *H. arborescens* (Thunb.) Cham. & Schlechtd.)
Muthathavhanna

Mabogo 140

- a. Herdboys and young men chew the root fresh, with milk, beer or mageu (*mabundu*). The juice is swallowed and is said to make a man strong, powerful and hardy, in other words it is an aphrodisiac. The Venda name points at its use by men. b. The boiled root decoction is one of the medicines needed for treatment of a disease known as *ngoma*, which has a depressed fontanelle as one of its main symptoms. c. A leaf infusion is taken as a remedy for abdominal disorders as well as for general cleaning of stomach, kidneys and blood.

APOCYNACEAE

16. **Acokanthera oppositifolia** (Lam.) Codd *Mabogo 185*
(= *A. venenata* sensu Stapf non G. Don)
Musilili

Although this plant is considered poisonous in most respects, it is still used medicinally. In combination with other medicines, the infusion of the root bark is a remedy for long lasting and abnormal menstrual periods. It is tabooed as a source of firewood because it is said that if it is burnt, the women in the household will experience indefinite menstrual flow. In view of this understanding, sticks of this plant are included in the hedge fence to discourage women from obtaining wood from this source.

17. **Carissa bispinosa** (L.) Desf. ex Brenan *Mabogo 38*
Murungulu

a. The fruit is eaten fresh when ripe. b. Branches are cut and used for hedge fencing as well as firewood.

18. **Carissa edulis** Vahl *Mabogo 275*
(= *Azima pubescens* Suesseng.)
Murungulu

a. The fruit is sweet with a delicious flavour when ripe. It is enjoyed most by young people. b. The root is soaked, together with many others, in a clay pot to yield an infusion used for making the soft porridge known as *tshiunza* which is eaten by a baby from birth until it can eat hard porridge.

19. *Landolphia kirkii* T.-Dyer

Mabogo 76

Muvhundo

- a. The fruit, known as *mavhundo*, is enjoyed by both old and young. b. The latex is sweet and used for making birdlime sticky and strong, especially when prepared from the root bark of *Cassine aethiopica*. It is once again used to restore stickiness in birdlime when it becomes weak after long periods of exposure to heat (i.e. when laid to catch birds) as well as constant chewing. c. The root, combined with roots of *Albizia adianthifolia*, *Ricinus communis* and fruit from *Solanum incanum*, is dried and powdered to make a remedy for the diseases known as *nowa khulu* (piles) and *nowagudu* (a type of rheumatoid arthritis). d. Sticks from this plant are anointed with magical medicines and placed across entrances to homesteads, cattle byres, huts, etc. to protect them against witchcraft and magical attacks. When used for magical purposes it is called *luvhambo*. e. Thin saplings are preferred for basket rims and for construction of thatch roofs as wattles or binders.

20. *Rauvolfia caffra* Sond.

Mabogo 70

(= *R. natalensis* Sond.)

Munadzi

- a. An infusion of the bark is taken and used for killing maggots in wounds. b. A decoction from the bark is used for making soft porridge which is eaten for abdominal and pelvic troubles, especially when boiled with the bark of *Parinari curatellifolia* subsp. *mobola*. It is also known as *Muhatu* because it arrests development of many diseases while the relevant medicines are still being prepared, especially where *Tabernaemontana elegans* is scarce or not known (the name is derived from *-hatula* = to stop short). b. The wood is workable and used for household utensils such as spoons, bowls, etc.

21. *Tabernaemontana elegans* Stapf

Mabogo 216

(= *Conopharyngia elegans* (Stapf) Stapf)

Muhatu

- a. The fruit is edible and some people like it when it is ripe. The pulp is frequently added to vegetables as a condiment.
- b. A decoction of the root is reported to have a physiological effect of arresting and even calming down most diseases, especially when the correct medicines are still to be prepared. The name *Muhatu* refers to this function in the medicinal field (from: -*hatula* = to stop).
- c. The milky latex is added to birdlime to improve its strength and stickiness, more often when the birdlime is prepared from the latex of *Ficus burkei*.
- d. The latex is also used for curdling milk and making its taste sour.
- e. Powdered fruit medicine is reported to be effective against venereal diseases. When this species is not available most people normally substitute it with *Rauvolfia caffra* for other uses.

22. *Wrightia natalensis* Stapf

Mabogo 206

Musunzi

Roots are chewed fresh and the juice is swallowed by herdboys and young men. It is understood to have aphrodisiac properties and is, as such, used medicinally in this regard.

ARALIACEAE

23. *Cussonia spicata* Thunb.

Mabogo 276

Musenzhe

- a. A new-born baby is washed with the infusion of the root so that it would grow into a strong, heavy and vigorous child. It is commonly used as a substitute for, or in combination with, *Adansonia digitata*, especially when the latter is scarce or unavailable.
- b. The bark is pounded in water and the infusion taken orally for internal ulcers. Powdered bark is included in the treatment of magically caused

ulcers called *zwipfula* and *pfuko*. In general it is used for or against magic. c. Leaves were worn to cover the body during ritual cults.

24. Schefflera umbellifera (Sond.) Baill.

Mabogo 167

(= *Cussonia umbellifera* Sond.)

Mukho

The wood is soft, white and workable. It is used for household utensils such as knives, spoons, plates, bowls, etc.

ARECACEAE

25. Phoenix reclinata Jacq.

Mabogo 66

Mutshevho, Mutshema

a. The ripe fruit is enjoyed by all age groups. Sometimes the unripe fruit is also collected and stored in clay pots until ripe. b. A fermented beverage (palm wine) is made from the sap that oozes from the stem when the crown is cut off. This is collected in large containers and kept until it is fully fermented and then drunk or sold. A number of trees may be affected in order to get enough sap. The wine that is made is also known as *mutshema*. Leaves are used as gutters for sap collection. c. The use of leaves obtained from this palm for thatching is considered inferior and ugly and are used only in times of shortage. d. Parts of the rachis are occasionally chewed at one end and then used as toothbrushes.

26. Hyphaene coriacea Gaertn.

Mabogo 230

(= *H. natalensis* Kunze)

Mulala

a. Petioles and leaves provide an important source of structural fibre used for weaving baskets and a variety of receptacles. b. They are also used as thatch. c.

An intoxicating beverage, called *mutshema*, is also made from the sap of this species.

ASCLEPIADACEAE

27. **Asclepias fruticosa L.**

Mabogo 234

Mutshulwa

A decoction of the root is used to organize the stomach and reproduction in women, especially when there is some difficulty with falling pregnant.

28. **Pentarrhinum insipidum E. Mey.**

Mabogo 124

Phulule

Leaves are cooked into a potherb which is eaten with porridge. It is normally cooked with other vegetable leaves as a spice.

29. **Sarcostemma viminale (L.) R.Br.**

Mabogo 277

Mutshiso

Powdered root and stem are applied through incisions made by a sharp instrument (e.g. a razor blade) on breasts of a woman who has problems with lactation. It is also a major ingredient of the medicine used to stimulate production of milk even in women who have never given birth. If the mother cannot breast-feed her own child, say because of some illness, this treatment is given to any close relative, preferably the grandmother, so that she can feed the child until he can share porridge with the rest of the family. Such cases are not uncommon among the Vhavenda, and probably also among other African tribes. This medicine is also used in animals for the same purpose.

ASTERACEAE

30. **Athrixia phylicoides DC.**

Mabogo 278

Mutshatshaila, Mubosotie

- a. An infusion from the root is reported to have aphrodisiac properties. People who know the effect of the plant, discourage its use by bachelors when they say *Mutshatshaila muri u sa liwi nga khombe*, meaning "it is a medicine that should not be taken by a bachelor".
- b. The extract from soaked roots and leaves is taken as an anthelmintic.
- c. The dried or fresh leaves (including stem tips) are boiled and the extract is drunk with sugar as a tea. The name, *Mubosotie*, means that it is a wild tea plant.

31. **Bidens pilosa L.**

Mabogo 23

(= *B. leucantha* (L.) Willd.)

Mushidzhi

- a. Leaves are cooked and eaten with porridge. It is also included as a piquant in most other vegetables. It is more delicious when cooked with some condiment, such as marula seed kernels or peanuts.
- b. The infusion of boiled leaves is drunk to stop long lasting menstruation. This infusion is also understood to promote conception.
- c. The same infusion is also used to test whether the new-born baby needs soft porridge or liquid food.

32. **Brachylaena discolor DC.**

Mabogo 126

Mufhata

- a. The infusion of the leaf is used for the treatment of roundworm infection.
- b. The plant is popular for its strong and durable wood. Its Venda name relates to its important use in building (from *-fhatā* = to build). It is preferred for roofs, fencing posts, wall posts, tool handles and as firewood.

33. **Dicoma zeyheri** Sond.

Mabogo 239

Tshitoni, Thoni

Flowers and fruits are burnt and powdered for use against an infection in women by the disease known as *goni*, which interferes with fertility and also causes early infant deaths. The main symptoms are sores in the vaginal canal and nail biting behaviour in the child. The sores in the mother are scraped off and mixed with the medicine described above which is applied on the site of sores and also taken orally. The child is also given this medicine orally. It is traditionally recommended that women who fail to fall pregnant or experience miscarriages or scanty menstruation must be checked and treated for it if infected. The name *goni* refers to the martial eagle which catches chickens and seems to warn women that they might lose their children in a similar way if they are not treated when infected. The plant name *Tshitoni* is related to the thorny appearance of the flower heads which look like hedgehogs.

34. **Gerbera ambigua** (Cass.) Sch. Bip.

Mabogo 201

(= *G. kraussii* Sch. Bip.)
(= *G. discolor* Harv.)
(= *G. elegans* Muschl.)
(= *G. lynchii* Duemmer)
(= *G. nervosa* Sond.)

Ito la ndau

The Venda name relates to the resemblance of the flower to a lion's eye. The leaves are cooked and eaten with porridge, preferably as a spice.

35. **Helichrysum nudifolium** (L.) Less.

Mabogo 156

The root is boiled and the decoction given to a child to encourage weaning.

36. **Senecio longiflorus** (DC.) Sch. Bip.

Mabogo 99

(= *Kleinia longiflora* DC.)

Mushavhavhakadzi

- a. Green and fresh branches are chewed and the juice swallowed as an emetic, especially when poison has been taken accidentally. b. Chewing the soft branch is also understood to induce love in women whom a man may meet. The name *Mushavhavhakazi* refers to this magical effect (from: -*shavha* = to buy + -*vhakazi* = Shona for women). c. Stems are also used as an ingredient of snuff.

37. **Senecio** sp.

Mabogo 171

Tshitanzisanngwa

The leaf is pounded into a paste which is used as an emetic. The Venda name has been derived from this use but relates to a dog (from: -*tanzisa* = to cause to vomit + -*nngwa* = dog). Some people use it to stop drinking. It is said that vomiting beer mixed with sap from this plant causes one to dislike drinking.

38. **Senecio** sp.

Mabogo 160

Tshifatafatane

Dried leaves are burnt and smoked for colds and related ailments. They may be crushed, rolled in paper and smoked like tobacco or smoked in a pipe.

39. **Sonchus oleraceus** L.

Mabogo 26

Shashe

The leaf is preferred alone or used to add a piquant taste to cooked vegetables. It may also be dried and stored for future use. The inclusion of some condiment makes it all the more delicious.

40. **Vernonia neocorymbosa** Hilliard

Mabogo 240

(= *Vernonia corymbosa* (L.f.) Less.)

Phathaphathane

- a. An infusion of pounded leaf and root as well as softer parts of stem is used as a remedy against intestinal worms in domestic animals. b. The infusion is also taken to facilitate abortion, but it may have fatal side effects if not properly used.

41. **Vernonia stipulacea** Klatt

Mabogo 134

(= *V. ampla* O. Hoffm.)

(= *V. podocoma* Sch. Bip. ex Oliv. & Hiern)

Mululudza

An infusion of soaked or boiled root is drunk as a contraceptive two or three times a day. It is normally kept in a bottle or clay pot for daily use. Termination of use is said to result in the immediate end of contraception.

BALANITACEAE

42. **Balanites maughamii** Sprague

Mabogo 71

(= *B. dawei* Sprague)

Mudulu

- a. Fruit of this plant is considered inedible. b. The wood is beautiful, workable and used for spoons, stirrers, bowls, dishes, etc. c. Thorns are used magically to protect homesteads when anointed with magical powders in fat.

BIGNONIACEAE

43. **Markhamia acuminata** (Klotzsch) K. Schum.

Mabogo 241

Mulakholomo

The leaves are preferred for cattle fodder. The Venda name expresses the fact that it is eaten by cattle (from: *la* = to eat + *kholomo* = cattle)

BOMBACACEAE

44. *Adansonia digitata* L.

Mabogo 120

Muvhuyu

- a. Growing in the drier areas of the Northern and North-western Transvaal, this plant provides food for people who may experience years without a sound harvest from their lands. The pulp around the seeds is eaten fresh or dried. It is usually soaked in milk or water and eaten as such. The fruit is not picked from the tree, but is allowed to fall. However, impatient herdboys sometimes resort to hitting them down with stones and poles. The surplus fruit is generally dried and stored for use during periods of food scarcity. The seeds are removed by stamping the dry fruit contents in a mortar. The resulting powder is kept sealed in clay pots until it is needed for cooking the popular porridge known as *phwambwali* or *khwangwali*. The powdered pulp may also be eaten in powder form as *mugumo*. b. An infusion of the bark is added to the water used to wash a baby so that he or she can grow fast with thick bones, like the trunk of the tree which grows to become very thick. c. Any plant growing on this one (either semiparasite or epiphytic orchid) is taken (the process is called *u rwa tshilimbo*), mixed with other magical powders (*phambas*), and used to protect a homestead against witchcraft. Because it is not easily climbed and is rarely struck by lightning, it is believed to be able to protect a homestead against lightning strikes, especially ones caused by magic. It is believed to present the image of a horrible and aggressive snake to witches when they visit the homestead at night, probably because the trunk of the tree is smooth like the skin of a snake. d. The bark of the tree has long been a great source of fibre used for cordage, beer sieves, ropes, mats, snares, etc.

BORAGINACEAE

45. *Ehretia rigida* (Thunb.) Druce

Mabogo 35

Murovherovhe, Mutepe

- a. The ripe fruit is eaten, but is not in great demand because of its sickly sweet taste.
b. A stick from this plant is anointed with plant and animal medicines and used

magically as a protective rod when long and dangerous journeys are undertaken. This protective rod is termed *thamu* and is held by the leader of the trip who is known as *phangami*. It is believed to ward off enemies and dangerous animals along the way. c. The root is burnt, powdered and mixed with similarly treated root of *Protasparagus falcatus* and applied on cuts around sprained joints. Some people maintain that a powdered bone from the leg of a dog must be included if anything has to work. The powdered root bark is also an ingredient of the medicine used for the disease called *pfuko*. d. Sticks from this plant were used to make bows as well as 'bull-sticks' for fire drilling. e. A roasted lash from the plant does not break easily. f. The wood is good for fire.

BURSERACEAE

46. **Commiphora marlothii Engl.**

Mabogo 203

Mufhafha

The infusion of the bark is drunk for treatment of pellagra, especially when it involves drying and peeling of skin. The use of this plant for the disease appears to be related to the peeling of the bark on the stem of the tree.

47. **Commiphora mollis (Oliv.) Engl.**

Mabogo 149

(= *C. welwitschii* Engl.)

Muukhuthu

a. The wood is light and workable. It is used for a variety of household utensils. b. The wood is not suitable for making fire. c. This plant is generally used as an ornament and wind-breaker.

CACTACEAE

48. **Opuntia ficus-indica** (L.) Mill.

Mabogo 279

Mudoro

- a. The fruit is enjoyed by both young and old people. The fruit has stinging spines which must be removed before it can be eaten. Consumption of too much of the fruit leads to constipation. b. A decoction of the root is applied drop by drop to treat toothache. It is applied to the affected tooth only.

CAESALPINIACEAE

49. **Bauhinia galpinii** N.E. Br.

Mabogo 89

(= *B. punctata* Bolle)

Mutswiriri

- a. The root is soaked, together with other medicines, in the clay pot called *thufhana*, and the infusion used for the soft porridge known as *tshunza* which is given to a baby as his or her staple food from birth. b. The flexible saplings are gathered and used as wattles in construction of roofs and other structures such as courtyard walls, etc.

50. **Burkea africana** Hook.

Mabogo 138

Mufhulu

- a. The plant is popular for the caterpillars gathered from, and named after it (they are called *mafhulu*). These are fried and eaten with porridge or stored for future use. b. The wood is good for carving mortars, pestles as well as other household items. c. The wood is also good for fire. d. The tree is commonly left for shade in fields and around homesteads. It has been reported as a medicinal plant but the information in this regard is not as yet available.

51. **Bolusanthus speciosus** (H. Bol.) Harms

Mabogo 152

Mukambana

- a. Root and stem bark are boiled to obtain an infusion applied as an enema to treat venereal diseases and for general cleaning of blood and kidneys. It is also included in the preparation for *divhu*, a disease caused by sexual intercourse with a woman who has had an abortion or miscarriage. b. The use of this plant as a source of firewood has been tabooed for ages. Reasons for this may be its medicinal importance, its lack of good fire, and foul-smelling smoke.

52. **Cassia abbreviata** Oliv.

Mabogo 118

Muboma, Mulambadivhu

The name *Muboma* refers to the sjambok-like shape of its fruit (*mboma* = sjambok). The other Venda name stresses its importance as an ingredient of the medicines used for treatment of the disease known as *divhu* (from *lamba* = reject + *divhu*). The disease *divhu* or *devhu* is explained under *Pouzolzia mixta*. Here the root bark is boiled and drunk with other medicines.

53. **Cassia petersiana** Bolle

Mabogo 28

(= *C. delagoensis* Harv.)

Munembenembe

- a. Pods are eaten when ripe but are not very palatable and are picked only out of hunger and shortage of other fruits. b. A decoction of the root is used as a mouthwash for toothache. c. Combined with a decoction of *Terminalia sericea* and *Corchorus tridens*, it is used for gonorrhoea and syphilis. d. It is also used as a remedy for stomach ache and a treatment for sterility and barrenness.

54. **Colophospermum mopane** (Kirk ex Benth.) Kirk ex J. Leonard

(= *Copaiba mopane* (Kirk ex Benth.) Kuntze *Mabogo 242*

(= *Copaifera mopane* Kirk ex Benth.

Mupani

- a. The plant is popular for the caterpillars gathered from it and known as *Mashonzha*. These mopani worms are gathered, roasted and stored for future use, or sold. They are now also sold in shops and supermarkets. b. This plant is an important source of wood for fire, fencing posts and building materials.

55. **Peltophorum africanum** Sond.

Mabogo 43

(= *Brasilettia africanum* (Sond.) Kuntze)

Musese

- a. An infusion from soaked bark is taken orally as an anthelmintic as well as a treatment for stomach troubles. When boiled, the decoction is a remedy for colds and other chest complaints. b. Caterpillars found on this plant are also fried and eaten or stored for future use. c. In the past leaves were used to cover the body (as clothes), especially during ritual ceremonies.

56. **Piliostigma thonningii** (Schumach.) Milne-Redh.

Mabogo 272

Mukolokote

Roots are cut to size and soaked together with roots from other plants in a clay pot known as *thufhana*. The resulting infusion is used for making the soft porridge called *tshiunza*, which is the staple food for most Venda babies. The inclusion of this plant makes the porridge sour and pleasant to eat. It also has the effect of organizing an infant's stomach.

57. **Schotia brachypetala** Sond.

Mabogo 37

(= *S. brachypetala* Sond. var. *pubescens* Burtt Davy)

(= *S. semireducta* Merxm.)

Mulubi, Mununzwu

- a. Young and old people enjoy the nectar which drips in abundance from the dense flower heads produced on the older branches of the plant. The name *Mununzwu* refers to this sweet nectar. b. A decoction of the bark is taken for heartburn as well as dysentery in children. Adults also take it for dysentery and diarrhoea. Because of its effectiveness in the treatment of diarrhoea in children, it is commonly included in the *thufhana* medicines from which the infusion is obtained for preparation of the child's soft porridge. c. The wood is collected for fire, but it is not very good. d. The tree is generally preferred for shade and beauty, and is usually left standing in fields and around homesteads.

CAPPARACEAE

58. **Boscia albitrunca** (Burch.) Gilg & Ben.

Mabogo 68

(= *B. pauchellii* Kuntze)

(= *B. transvaalensis* Pest.)

Muthobi

- a. The fruit is edible but is less preferred because of the sickly sweet taste. b. Roots of this tree were gathered and ground into powder and used for porridge by the Vhavenda during drought periods, especially during the famine period popularly known as *ndala ya mithobi*. During this period of food scarcity, the Vhavenda, as well as other neighbouring nations, depended largely on this plant for their survival. This may also explain why, until very recently the plant was tabooed as a source of firewood.

59. **Cadaba aphylla** (Thunb.) Willd.

Mabogo 220

Tshikuni, Munnamutswu

The two Venda names refer to the colour of the root. The name *Tshikuni* is normally used to refer to a piece of wood burnt on one end. The root bark of this plant is used magically to bring luck.

60. **Capparis tomentosa** Lam.

Mabogo 204

(= *C. corymbifera* E. Mey. ex Sond.

Muobadali, Muombandadzi

The Venda name has been derived from *-omba* = to grab + *-ndadzi* = lightning. *Muobadali* has a North Sotho tone showing that the North Sotho call it by a similar name. The derivation of its name is related to its function. It is used magically to protect homesteads against lightning, especially when caused by witchcraft. The root bark is powdered into a reddish powder which is dried and mixed with other magical powders and used to guard the homestead against other evils or to activate it. It is said that the plant should not be collected during the rainy season because it may attract lightning instead of driving it away. The reddish powder is used for discouraging opponents and witnesses from counter-evidence in courts and arguments.

61. **Cleome monophylla** L.

Mabogo 30

Mutohotoho

Leaves are cooked into a palatable pot herb known as *muroho wa mutohotoho*. It is generally mixed with *Cleome gynandra*. Most people prefer it with pounded peanut or marula kernels, known as *thanga*, or some other condiment, which tends to minimize its sharp taste and make it softer and more delicious.

62. **Cleome gynandra L.**

Mabogo 29

(= *Gynandropsis gynandra* DC.)

(= *G. pentaphylla* (L.) Briq.)

Murudi

This herb generally grows as a weed on cultivated soils, especially around homesteads. It either grows as a weed from the dumpings of the previous seasons, or as a result of purposeful planting. Leaves and young shoots are cooked and eaten with porridge. It may be cooked on its own or with other vegetables, preferably with a condiment. It may also be added to other vegetables as a spice or for its piquant taste. Any surplus may be cooked and dried to be stored for future use as *mukusule*, the name given to a dried form of every cooked vegetable.

63. **Maerua angolensis DC.**

Mabogo 153

Mutambanamme

- a. The leaf and bark are scalded in a clay pot and heated without water. When heated sufficiently a child suffering from convulsions is covered, together with the mother, with a blanket and the clay pot is opened to let the steam off. The disease is popularly known as *misho* and the blanket is used to contain the steamy smoke.
- b. A decoction of the leaf and bark is taken as a remedy for stomach ache.
- c. Crushed leaves are used as a remedy for headache through steaming.
- d. A decoction of the bark also serves as a purgative.
- e. Wood of this plant is tabooed for use as firewood, probably because of its medicinal importance and short-lived fire.

64. **Maerua caffra (DC.) Pax**

Mabogo 243

Mutapatila

The root and stem bark is used magically to protect a homestead against witchcraft. It is believed to scare away witches by causing them to fight amongst themselves when they arrive at the homestead. It is also believed to bring chaos and fights to

the homestead if used as fuelwood and therefore women avoid collecting it with their wood.

CELASTRACEAE

65. Cassine aethiopica Thunb.

Mabogo 48

- (= *C. pubescens* (Eckl. & Zeyh.) Kuntze)
- (= *C. schlechteri* (Loes.) Davidson)
- (= *C. sphaerophylla* (Eckl. & Zeyh.) Kuntze)
- (= *C. velutinum* (Harv.) Loes.)
- (= *Mystroxylon aethiopicum* (Thunb.) Loes.)

Mugugunu, Mukwatule, Mukwatikwati

- a. The fruit is edible, but it is bitter when not fully ripe. It is much enjoyed by herdboys and other young people. The name *Mugugunu* relates to the edible fruit that is enjoyed when ripe.
- b. The name *Mukwatule* refers to the use of the root bark of the plant for making birdlime (from: -*kwatula* = to peel off). The bark is pounded and washed to remove unpounded material. The resulting paste (now called *vhulimbo*) must first be strengthened by mixing with latex of *Landolphia kirkii*. The strengthening process is known as *u kumulula*. Birdlime may also be strengthened with latex from *Ficus burkei*, especially when *Landolphia kirkii* is not available.
- c. The third name, *Mukwatikwati*, is commonly used by traditional medicinal practitioners and refers to its use as an ingredient of the magical medicine used for keeping people together (i.e. to promote unity and love for one another).
- d. The wood is good for knobkerries and tool handles.

66. Cassine transvaalensis (Burtt Davy) Codd

Mabogo 4

- (= *Crocoxylon transvaalense* (Burtt Davy) N.K.B. Robson)

- (= *Pseudocassine transvaalensis* (Burtt Davy) Bred.)

Mulumanamana, Mukuvhazwivhi

- a. The fruit is eaten by young people when ripe. They also enjoy sucking a whitish substance that is found on the upper surfaces of the leaves. The sugary substance is

probably deposited by some insect. b. The name *Mukuvhazwivhi* relates to the medicinal use of the plant. It is popular with only a few people. The root bark is boiled and the decoction used to treat the disease known as *nowa-khulu* (piles or haemorrhoids) in humans and domestic animals. The symptoms are blood in stools as well as loose bowels at times. The decoction, which is very bitter, is drunk in cupfuls three or four times a day. The disease is normally healed within a day or two. c. This medicine is also used against venereal diseases and as an anthelmintic.

67. **Hippocratea** sp.

Mabogo 36

Mukolomo, Mutshilarī

a. Roots are soaked in a clay pot known as *thufhana*, and the liquid, called *tshiunza*, is used for making food for a baby from birth up to crawling stage. b. It is an ingredient of medicines used for invoking ancestors during *malombo* ritual. c. A semiparasite growing on this plant is mixed with *Securidaca longepedunculata* and *Pleurostyliacapensis* and used to return the effects of witchcraft to the person who bewitched the other. d. The oppositely branched stems are used as toy cattle by children.

68. **Hippocratea crenata** (Klotzsh) K. Schum. & Loes.

Mabogo 187

(= *H. kirkii* Oliv.)

Luuvhū

This plant is abundant in the mist belt forests of Venda where it is used for binding thatch on roofs as well as for wattling.

69. **Maytenus senegalensis** (Lam.) Exell

Mabogo 45

(= *Gymnosporia senegalensis* (Lam.) Loes.)

Tshiphandwa

a. This is one of the plants that are popular for workable and durable wood for making stirrers (*phetho*) and cooking spoons (*mpfo*). b. Thorns receive their fair

share of use in removing seed kernels of the marula. c. Roots are soaked, together with those of *Artobotrys monteiroae*, *Cassine* sp., *Rhoicissus tridentata* and many others, to yield an infusion used for cooking soft porridge known as *tshiunza* that is food for a baby until late childhood. This infusion is understood to play an important prophylactic and remedial role in the health of the child. The plant under discussion is, particularly, known to be a remedy and prophylactic for the disease called *tshilala*, which is characterized by diarrhoea and a sunken fontanelle. d. Roots are used for nerve pains, especially when mixed with *Ziziphus mucronata*. e. Thorns are anointed with magical medicines and nailed all along the fence of the homestead to keep away witches and others with ill wishes. f. The wood is used for fire when dry.

70. *Maytenus tenuispina* (Sond.) Marais

Mabogo 224

(= *Celastrus tenuispinus* Sond.)

(= *Gymnosporia botshabelensis* Loes.)

(= *G. tenuispina* (Sond.) Szyszyl.

Ntsatshilambe (male), *Dira*

This is considered the male variant of *Salacia rehmannii* and is mixed with it for magical purposes to make a person slippery or unnoticeable in case of trouble. *Salacia rehmannii* grows shorter and propagates through long, fleshy rhizomatous stems. Many upright-stemmed individuals or patches of plants may arise along the length of one root. It is probably due to this thickness of root bark as well as its rapid vegetative reproduction that the Venda people consider and name it as a female *Dira*. The female one is generally treated and valued as the most effective of the two types (see also under *Salacia rehmannii*)

71. *Maytenus undata* (Thunb.) Blakelock

Mabogo 225

Tshibvukahalwa

Fresh branches are used to prevent beer from spilling when carried in a clay pot. The wood is also good for fire.

72. **Pleurostylia capensis** (Turcz.) Oliv.

Mabogo 223

Murumelelwa

The name *Murumelelwa* is a technical one used by medicinal practitioners to indicate that it can be sent away (from *rumela* = to send). This particular species is considered to be a male in traditional medicinal circles. The female *Murumelelwa* has not as yet been identified for the purpose of this project. It is more broad-leaved, with a fresh, thick, and orange-coloured bark. The stem and root bark is powdered and mixed with powdered parts of semiparasitic plants and other ingredients of either plant or animal origin to make a magical mixture which is blown away to affect a remote target. Blowing is preceded by prayers (incantations) and calling by name of a distant person who is a victim. It may kill him, make him mad or encourage him to do anything else depending on what is wanted. This plant is considered to be so important that it is sold (by one traditional practitioner to another or by any collector of medicines) at a very high price per piece.

73. **Salacia rehmannii** Schinz

Mabogo 159

Dira, Musasalabwa, Ntsatshilambe, Tavhatapano, Tavhatapi,
Phatshimima

This is one of the plants with the greatest number of vernacular names. The multitude of names indicate its popularity amongst most African tribes. What is interesting about most of these names, is that they all suggest its magical powers. For example, *Dira*, derived from Sotho, is actually a short naming for something close to *Dira a di bonwi*, which means that it is either impossible or difficult to see a person who is using or has been doctored by this medicine, and this happens at a time and place at the discretion of the person using it. The term *dira* is a plural for *sera* and refers to something bad such as a war party, an enemy or anything that is dangerous and likely to be difficult to tackle. The medicine is used in this sense to escape notice by anybody with a negative motive. In southern Africa, the African groups (including the Vhavenda), use the powdered bark of the root, or piece of root for luck in job seeking, influx control (i.e. to evade arrests related to pass offences), to escape notice by the police, to evade hooliganism in large cities while looking for jobs or travelling between job and home. However, it is also used by

wrong-doers such as criminals, witches and thieves to escape notice. *Phathatshimima* is a name derived from the use of this plant for beating traps and plots (from *-phatha* = to disrupt + *-tshimima* = a party or group of organizers thereof). In this sense it is believed to operate by discouraging and misdirecting a person's attention. Lastly, *Tavhatapi* and *Tavhatapano* have evidently been borrowed from Shona and literally mean: 'Where do I sleep ?' and 'I sleep here' respectively. This is because a person who is properly doctored by this medicine, or who possesses it, is supposed to be able to sleep anywhere and nothing, be it a snake, a wild beast or an enemy, will bother him. It is of common use amongst people who periodically take journeys through dangerous and unknown places. The same applies to hunting trips and warfares. This plant is also an ingredient of many magical mixtures. It is traditionally considered as a female variety of *Maytenus tenuispina* (for reasons given under the latter species), and as more effective. It is rare and any person who possesses it, finds himself in a position to do business through exorbitant prices or exchanges.

CHENOPODIACEAE

74. *Chenopodium album* L.

Mabogo 20

Dale-dale

Leaves are boiled to make a pot herb called *dale-dale*. Fresh leaves are generally added to other vegetables. The vegetable is relished with porridge, which is commonly served separately.

75. *Chenopodium* sp.

Mabogo 222

Muthathathuri

The name *Muthathathuri* (from: *thatha* = chase or ward off + *thuri* = polecat) refers to this plant as the one that, if used medicinally or magically, will get rid of magical 'polecats' introduced into a human being's life through witchcraft. The soft stem and leaves are pounded together, mixed with other substances of plant and animal origin to produce a paste called *tsemo*. This paste is burned and the patient

inhales the resulting smoke, which then chases away the witch's familiars, particularly the ones known as *thuri* (polecats).

CLUSIACEAE (GUTTIFERAE)

76. **Garcinia livingstonei** T. Anders.

Mabogo 244

Muphiphi

- a. The fruit is eaten and has a pleasant-tasting, sweet-acid pulp. Both children and adults find it very palatable and refreshing.
- b. The root is reported to be used for the prevention of particular events, depending on mixture used, e.g., preventing wars or fights, as contraceptives, etc..
- c. The wood makes a rather good fire.

COMBRETACEAE

77. **Combretum collinum** Fresen.

Mabogo 245

Muvuvha

- a. The plant is preferred for firewood and
- b. shade saplings may be used as temporary building material.

78. **Combretum erythrophyllum** (Burch.) Sond.

Mabogo 246

(= *C. glomeruliflorum* Sond.)

Muvuvhu

- a. The bark, removed from both the east and west side of the trunk, is boiled with other medicines to produce a decoction which is given to a woman with problems concerning pregnancy, especially when witchcraft is suspected. The treatment is termed *mbuso* (meaning to bring back to normal, or to restore). The medicine continues to be taken, even after conception, in order to maintain the pregnancy.
- b. Long and straight branches always tempt people to use them in the construction of roofs and wattles, although they are easily attacked by wood-borers and termites.

79. **Combretum hereroense** Schinz

Mabogo 232

Mugavhi

- a. A decoction of the root bark is used as a remedy for heart diseases. b. The long and flexible branches are used as wattles in the construction of thatch roofs.

80. **Combretum imberbe** Wawra

Mabogo 83

Mudzwiri

Large quantities of wood from this plant are collected for various purposes. a. Thick and straight branches or tree trunks are required for building as fencing posts, roof poles, etc. It is considered to be one of the best sources of firewood. It burns so well when dry that it provides a good fire and relatively little ash and smoke at a time. b. Unconfirmed information suggests that it is used with *Sclerocarya birrea* subsp. *caffra*, *Diospyros lycioides*, *Combretum erythrophylum* and other species to restore or revive fertility in women. For this purpose it is said that only roots growing horizontally, especially those that cross footpaths, may be used. c. Grain mortars, tool handles, etc. are carved from its heartwood.

81. **Combretum molle** Sond.

Mabogo 51

(= *C. gueinzii* Sond.)

(= *C. holosericeum* Sond.)

Mugwiti

- a. This plant is used mostly as a source of firewood, for construction and building material. b. It is an ingredient of medicines used to encourage and maintain pregnancy. c. Leaves are boiled and the resulting decoction is taken for colds.

82. **Combretum mossambicense** (Klotzch) Engl.

Mabogo 210

Mulandou

Because it is known that the plant is eaten by elephants, it is believed that its inclusion in medicines that protect and guard a human body and life, makes a person as strong and fearsome as an elephant. The Venda name has been derived from the relationship of the plant with the elephant (from *-la* = eat + *-ndou* = elephant).

83. **Combretum zeyheri** Sond.

Mabogo 249

Mufhatelathundu

The Venda name indicates that the plant is used by recent immigrants or newcomers to build their homes. This is because local inhabitants already know that its straight and beautiful branches do not possess the essential qualities of a building material. The plant is too susceptible to attacks by wood-borers.

84. **Terminalia sericea** Burch. ex DC.

Mabogo 97

Mususu

a. The root is included in the medicine used in a baby's soft porridge called *tshunza*. This medicine in the soft porridge stops and prevents diarrhoea and dysentery. b. It is used to arrest purging in adults. c. A cow with protracted parturition or a hanging placenta is forced to swallow a decoction of root from this plant. d. It is also reported to be a reliable remedy for venereal diseases.

CONVOLVULACEAE

85. **Ipomoea obscura** (L.) Ker-Gawl.

Mabogo 131

(= *I. demissa* Hallier f.)

(= *I. fragilis* Choisy)

(= *I. longipes* Engl.)

Muduhwi

a. Not only the leaves of this plant, but also the caterpillars which feed on it are cooked to be eaten with porridge. These caterpillars are known as *maduhwi* in most areas and are commonly fried instead of cooked. The surplus may be dried and kept for future use or shared with neighbours. b. Bundles of flexible stems are often used as temporary binders as well as for skipping games by young people.

86. **Evolvulus alsinoides** (L.) L.

Mabogo 195

The dried leaves and stem are a remedy for flu, colds and related ailments. The medicine may be rolled in paper like tobacco or stuffed into a pipe to be smoked. Others prefer to burn it on hot coals and inhale the smoke while covered in a blanket.

CUCURBITACEAE

87. **Cucumis africanus** L.f.

Mabogo 202

(= *C. hookeri* Naud.)

Tshinyagu

a. Fresh and tender leaves are picked and cooked with other vegetable leaves. b. The seed has purgative effects and it is usually used with *Trichilia emetica* as an enema. Only two or three seeds are enough for one dose. The use of more seeds is said to be fatal.

88. **Momordica balsamina** L.

Mabogo 25

(= *M. involucrata* E. Mey. ex Sond.)

Tshibavhe

a. Leaves are cooked and eaten with porridge. More often it is included to give a piquant taste to other vegetables. b. The infusion of the leaf is drunk as an anti-emetic.

89. **Momordica boivinii** Baill.

Mabogo 121

(= *Raphanocarpus boivinii* (Baill.) Chiov.)

(= *R. tuberosus* Dinter)

Tshifhafhe

- a. Cooked leaves are eaten with porridge, especially as a spice. b. The root tuber, soaked in water, is used to bathe a baby so that it can grow bigger.

90. **Momordica foetida** Schum. & Thonn.

Mabogo 61

(= *M. cordifolia* E. Mey. ex Sond.)

Nngu

- a. Leaves are preferred as spices. They are mostly dried and stored in powder form for future use. b. The infusion of the leaf is a remedy for earache.

CUPRESSACEAE

91. **Widdringtonia nodiflora** (L.) Powrie

Mabogo 136

(= *W. cupressoides* (L.) Endl.)

Thaululo

- a. Together with the flowers and seeds of *Eucalyptus* sp., the root is used for the treatment of gonorrhoea and syphilis. b. A decoction of the root is also used for menstrual and uterine problems.

CYPERACEAE

92. **Cyperus esculentus** L.

Mabogo 253

Ngowe

The corm of this sedge is edible and is preferred by young herdboys.

93. **Cyperus latifolius** Poir.

Mabogo 247

Dzhesi

Leaves and stems are collected and dried before they are moistened and used for weaving mats. Where it grows in abundance, it is also used for thatching, especially as an underlayer.

94. **Cyperus sexangularis** Nees

Mabogo 248

Mutate

The stem is a good temporary source of structural fibre used for bondage. It may also be used for binding thatch as well as for making ox-whips, but it can be used for the latter purpose only for a day or two, unless it is kept moist.

EBENACEAE

95. **Diospyros lycioides** Desf.

Mabogo 212

Muthala

- a. The infusion of the root is used as an ingredient of medicines kept in a clay pot (a *thufhana*) that is used to make *tshiunza*. An infusion of a number of plants, including this one, is given to a child as *ntswu*, the nutritious fluid used to feed a child instead of soft porridge. b. Straight stems are used as lashes by herdboys and teachers.

96. **Diospyros mespiliformis** Hochst. ex A. DC.

Mabogo 39

Musuma

- a. The fruit is eaten when ripe, either fresh or dry. When dry it is commonly preferred soaked in water or milk. The dried fruit may be stamped into powder, with seeds removed, to be cooked into a type of porridge, especially during periods

of food scarcity. **b.** A decoction of boiled root is taken for dysentery and as a febrifuge. **c.** The wood is good for fire.

97. **Diospyros whyteana** (Hiern) F. White

Mabogo 178

(= *Royena whyteana* Hiern)

Munyavhili

The infusion of the leaf and root is used to treat a disease known as *munyavhili* which produces an itchy rash on the skin, especially under cold conditions.

98. **Euclea divinorum** Hiern

Mabogo 12

Mutangule

a. The fruit is edible and much enjoyed when ripe. **b.** Sticks from branches are chewed at one end and then used as toothbrushes. **c.** A decoction of the root is used as a purgative when taken orally. For a troubled and noisy stomach, headaches as well as for general purification of blood it should be taken as an enema. It is also used as a remedy for *divhu*. For toothache, the root is boiled and the decoction dropped into the ear to cure it for good. **d.** The infusion of the root is taken orally for general ill health.

99. **Euclea linearis** Zeyh. ex Hiern

Mabogo 172

Mutangule-musekene, Mukwatikwati

The vernacular name *Mutangule-musekene* reflects the smaller size of this species when compared to *E. divinorum*. **a.** It has smaller fruits which are also eaten when ripe. **b.** The other name, *Mukwatikwati*, is popular with medicinal practitioners who use it to treat sprained joints and fractured bones. It is also taken as a purgative and for toothache.

EQUISETACEAE

100. ***Equisetum ramosissimum*** Desf.

Vhulungwane

This plant is uprooted and boiled in milk and taken orally for a sickness known as *vhulungwane* which is said to arise as a result of a person having missed the necessary purification treatments after the death and burial of a family member. Such a treatment is to help those left behind forget about the deceased. Symptoms of this sickness are in the form of persistent fatigue and sleepiness. The name of the plant is derived from the way in which nodes of the plant fit into one another, i.e. like beads in a thread, from *vhulungu* = beads. The name of the sickness has apparently been derived from the name of the plant.

EUPHORBIACEAE

101. ***Androstachys johnsonii*** Prain

Mabogo 164

Musimbiri

The Venda name is derived from the strength, durability and hardness of the wood of this plant. It refers to the fact that the plant is as hard and strong as iron (from *-simbi* (or *-tsimbi*) = iron + *-ri* (or *-muri*) = tree). a. Straight branches and saplings are preferred as fencing posts as well as for the building of houses (walls and roofing) and other enclosures that require durable poles. It is recommended because it is not prone to attack by termites and wood-borers. Its resistance to attacks by these insects is largely ascribed to the bitter taste of the wood. b. This plant is not preferred as a source of firewood because it produces heavy smoke with an unpleasant smell.

102. **Bridelia micrantha** (Hochst.) Baill.

Mabogo 67

Munzere

- a. The fruit is eaten when ripe. b. The powdered bark is applied to burns. c. The decoction of the bark is used to treat gonorrhoea and other venereal diseases. d. Long, straight branches are laid across the rivers to make bridges and are also used for building huts.

103. **Bridelia mollis** Hutch.

Mabogo 9

Mukumbakumba

The sweetly flavoured fruit is enjoyed by young and old Vhavenda. Only the pulp is sucked.

104. **Croton gratissimus** Burch.

Mabogo 116

Mufhorola

Leaves are dried, crushed and then smoked for colds, flu and associated fevers. Dried leaves may be burnt on hot coals, in which case one covers oneself with a blanket; or the dried leaves rolled in paper and smoked like tobacco. A smoking pipe could also be used if available.

105. **Croton megalobotrys** Muell. Arg.

Mabogo 101

(=*C. gubouga* S. Moore)

Muruthu

The seed is stamped and taken with water as a purgative. It is important to follow expert dosage instructions since there is a possibility of fatal side effects due to overdose. It is commonly recommended that an adult should take one or three quarters of a seed at a time. It is reported that in case of an overdose, it is advisable to drink beef gravy in order to minimize the harmful effects. People are advised to drink the gravy as a precautionary measure, even before realising that an overdose

has been taken. The purgative is generally used for venereal diseases as well as for regular purification of blood and kidneys. Only adults may use this purgative, the quantity depending on the health and strength of the user.

106. **Croton sp.**

Mabogo 233

Muthathakhubi

- a. The plant is popular for its relationship with a certain type of green locust which is collected at certain times of the year. The locust is called *thathakhubi* and it is not clear whether the name of the plant has been derived from that of the locust or *vice versa*.
- b. The shrub is also used as a source of firewood.

107. **Euphorbia ingens E. Mey. ex Boiss.**

Mabogo 23

(= *E. natalensis* sensu Berg. non Bernh.)

(= *E. similis* Berg.)

Mukonde

The bark is used as a remedy for chronic ulcers and cancer, especially for the ulcers popularly known as *pfuko*, which the Venda people believe is caused by witchcraft. Some people call this illness *thahala* which may literally be interpreted as 'becoming tattered or disintegrating'. People become suspicious when it does not respond quickly to normal medical treatment and when it heals at one part of the body only to develop at another. The bark is heated in a clay pot which is sealed with a potsherd and cow dung. The affected part is then exposed to the hot steam of the heated bark several times. It is said that after some time, some bony material, believed to be bones of a mole introduced into the body through witchcraft, will start to appear piece by piece, indicating that the mole is dead as a result of the treatment. The bones are collected, ground into powder and mixed with the burnt bark of *Euphorbia ingens* as well as *Ehretia rigida* so that it can be applied to the ulcer. The process of bone collection, application of the powdered medicine and steaming continues until no more bones appear and, by this time, the ulcer will have been healed completely and permanently. The steaming process must be done

outside the homestead, preferably at a junction of foot-paths. I was shown a collection of bones said to have been collected from an ulcer after such treatment.

108. **Euphorbia tirucalli L.**

Mabogo 236

Mutungu

a. An infusion of the root is used as a remedy for pains in the body. Although said to be toxic, it is still used medicinally in small concentrations. b. Leaves are burnt and ground into powder which is then used prophylactically against poisoning. It is reported that after treatment a person will vomit whenever he has consumed poison.

109. **Manihot utilissima Pohl**

Mabogo 250

Mutumbula

Leaves are cooked and eaten with porridge. To improve the flavour and texture of the potherb, a condiment is added in the form of pounded peanuts or marula kernels. Pulp from the fruit of *Trichilia dregeana* may also be added when available. Any surplus that is collected may be dried and stored for future use, but it should first be cooked. The root tuber is also eaten after prolonged boiling. It is said that the tuber is poisonous if it is not boiled longer than other foods. Even when properly boiled, the tuber causes constipation if too much is consumed. In most cases the central root core or rind is removed before cooking because it is suspected to be the most poisonous part of the tuber. The tuber is cut into thin strips before cooking.

110. **Pseudolachnostylis maprouneifolia Pax**

Mabogo 226

Mutondowe

a. The root or stem bark extract is used as a purgative as well as a general body searcher for other diseases that cannot be easily identified. b. It is also taken for venereal diseases and noisy stomach. The use of this plant as described above, results in side effects in the form of itching boils and pimples which exude a liquid

substance all over the body. c. The burnt roots are sometimes used to treat pneumonia through smoking. d. The plant is also used for magical purposes in various mixtures (hence the name *Mutondowe* = to force through). e. The infusion of the bark and leaves is also used for trapping animals, especially kudus which incidentally feed on its fruit. The infusion is used for washing the traps so that they retain its flavour.

111. *Ricinus communis* L.

Mabogo 47

Mupfure

a. A decoction of the root is a remedy for toothache. b. Leaf infusion is a purgative. The seed is crushed and swallowed as a very strong purgative. The use of seeds of this plant must be very well understood, otherwise a person may die. The recommended dosage for adults is normally one to one and a half seeds. c. A decoction of boiled root is used for making soft porridge which is sprinkled with the powdered fruit of *Solanum panduriforme* as well as corn meal to be eaten for the disease known as *tshiliso*, which is caused by witchcraft and can show itself in the form of a variety of symptoms including headache, vomiting, loss of appetite, etc. d. The oil prepared from the seed is used for mixing powdered medicines for sticky application. e. It is also used for earache as well as f. for polishing and softening of leather skirts (*zwirivha*) worn by women.

112. *Securinega virosa* (Roxb. ex Willd.) Pax & K. Hoffm.

Mabogo 10

(= *Fluggea microcarpa* Blume)

Mutangauma, Mavhelematshena

a. The fruit is eaten when ripe. b. A decoction of the root is given to children for general body health. The name that is related to its medicinal use is *Mavhelematshena* (from *mavhele* = corn grains + *matshena* = white), and it refers to the fruit which is round and white when ripe. c. The flexible saplings are used for building and fencing.

113. **Spirostachys africana** Sond.

Mabogo 238

Muonze

- a. The root or stem bark is boiled to obtain a decoction used for making soft porridge for anybody suffering from stomach pains, noisy stomach, diarrhoea, or dysentery. Two or three spoonfuls of the soft porridge are considered enough. b. The bark is also soaked to obtain an infusion that is used as an enema for the general purification of blood and kidneys. c. It is never used for firewood because of the unpleasant smell of its smoke, which is also suspected to affect the eyes.

114. **Synadenium cupulare** (Boiss.) L.C. Wheeler

Mabogo 237

(= *S. arborescens* Boiss.)

Muswoswo

- a. Latex from this plant is a remedy for black quarter disease in cattle, known to the Venda people as *mali*. The name *mali* has been borrowed from Sotho and it means 'blood'. The latex is collected into some container. The hollow 'tail' of a calabash is properly cut and dipped into the latex. It is then pressed on the thighs or shoulders of the affected legs. Usually the coat of the animal on the part on which the latex has been applied, is burnt to form rings of hairless areas. To minimize this burning effect, these parts must first be smeared with oil or preferably pig fat. b. The same application is maintained for treatment of troubled eyes as well as sprained legs in cattle. c. It is said that if some two or three drops of the latex are added to bathing water, a person who uses the water becomes capable of running long distances without becoming tired. d. The plant is said to have other medicinal uses like for cramps, nerve pains, etc., but in very low concentrations and mixed with other medicines which neutralize its harmful effects. e. Pieces of stem are boiled and the infusion given to fowls.

115. **Tragia rupestris** Sond.

Mabogo 251

Tshitondovhe

The fruit is used to aid the emergence of teeth in children. It is used to rub the gums when combined with other medicines and burnt into powder. One medicinal practitioner maintained that it is the chief medicine for this purpose and that the others are included only to confuse its identification.

116. **Tragia** sp.

Mabogo 60

Dzaluma

a. Fresh leaves are cooked into a pot herb which is more tasty when taken with sour porridge (*mutuku*). If the leaves are washed before cooking, bicarbonate of soda must be added to facilitate proper cooking. The importance of this climber has encouraged people to collect it from its habitat in the cooler mountainous areas and plant it around their homesteads and gardens. The vegetable is commonly cooked with leaves of *Obertia tenax* and/or *Pouzolzia mixta*. b. The infusion of the leaf is rubbed on the forehead as a remedy for headache. c. It is also used in the treatment of gonorrhoea.

FLACOURTIACEAE

117. **Dovyalis caffra** (Hook. f. & Harv.) Hook. f.

Mabogo 252

(= *Aberia caffra* Hook. f. & Harv.)

Mutunu

a. The fruit is edible but not much preferred. b. Thorns are used to remove pieces of wood or tips of thorns that may happen to pierce and penetrate the soles of feet and hand palms. They are also used to extract kernels from seeds of marula fruit when the closing caps (opercula) are broken. c. Traditional practitioners use the thorns magically to protect homesteads against witchcraft.

118. **Trimeria grandifolia** (Hochst.) Warb.

Mabogo 174

(= *T. alnifolia* (Hook.) Harv.)

Muhashaphande, Muthethenya

The name *Muhashaphande* refers to the way in which the branches spread sideways while the other Venda name indicates the brittleness of the wood. a. The fruit is edible although it is not much preferred by the local people. b. It is used as a source of firewood as well as for c. carving spoons, knobkerries and other household utensils.

GUNNERACEAE

119. **Gunnera perpensa** L.

Mabogo 63

Shambodavhadzimu

a. Fresh leaves are gathered and cooked to be eaten with porridge. It is less preferred and generally cooked in combination with other vegetables. b. The rhizome is an ingredient of "magical medicines" used to protect a homestead against witchcraft. It is said that when used with water and sand from standing water, the witch who visits the homestead during the night sees the homestead as a dam of water with this plant spreading all over the surface. The witch will then think that he/she is lost and turn back.

ICACINACEAE

120. **Pyrenacantha grandiflora** Baill.

Mabogo 209

Bwere

The root bark is pounded into powder which becomes an ingredient of magical powders used for luck as well as peaceful feasts. It is used for the same purpose with a view to winning court cases, escaping danger, etc.

LAMIACEAE

121. **Leonotis mollis** Benth.

Mabogo 190

Mununzu

The sweet nectar is sucked by young people.

122. **Plectranthus laxiflorus** Benth.

Mabogo 255

Bunganyunu, Sindambudzi

The vernacular names refer to the smell of crushed leaves and stems which are used for warding off mosquitoes during summer.

LILIACEAE

123. **Aloe marlothii** Berger var. **marlothii**

Mabogo 254

Bindamutshe, Tshikhophpha

a. Leaves are pounded and the resulting sap is used to soak seeds especially cereals, before they are sown. This treatment is known as *u suka mbeu* and is believed to make them more resistant and productive. b. The sap is also an ingredient of the medicine used for the treatment of *divhu*, a disease characterized by a sunken "fontanelle" (in adults) and a malfunction of the alimentary and urinary systems. c. A decoction of the root is used as a purgative in a mixture called *falo* for treatment of stomach troubles and infection by tapeworms.

124. **Aloe microcantha** Haw.

Mabogo 259

Tshikhophpha tshituku

The Venda name indicates that it is a smaller type of aloe. The infusion of the leaf is a remedy for dysentery in children. Depending on the suspected cause of the

disease, it may be used on its own or with other magical powders, especially when witchcraft is not excluded.

125. *Protasparagus buchananii* (Bak.) Oberm.

Mabogo 256

(= *Asparagus buchananii* Bak.)

Lufhaladzamakole

- a. The infusion of the root is used to treat vomiting in children and adults. b. Herdboys and other young people burn the stems and leaves of this plant to chase away clouds when it is cold. The Venda name refers to this suspected effect of the smoke on the clouds. At Nzhelele the people also sing *duvha*, *duvha i da ngeno*, *muranzi*, *muranzi i ya Ha-Matsa*, meaning that the sunshine must come to them and the cloudiness must go to Ha-Matsa, the area west of Nzhelele.

126. *Protasparagus falcatus* (L.) Oberm.

Mabogo 181

(= *Asparagus falcatus* L.)

Govhakhanga

The Venda name relates to its hooked spines. Besides being used for a. the treatment of vomiting in children, b. the burnt and powdered root is applied to cuts around sprained joints.

127. *Sansevieria hyacinthoides* (L.) Druce

Mabogo 280

Savha

- a. Small pieces of the root are soaked with other medicines in the clay pot known as *thufhana*. The resulting infusion is used for making the soft porridge called *tshunza*, which is eaten by an infant from birth until he/she can take hard porridge. b. The infusion of the leaf is a remedy for diarrhoea in young children. It is also used to treat babies who become ill as a result of their mothers falling pregnant when still breastfeeding. c. The leaf is a source of fibre used for making baskets of different

types and sizes used as containers by the people of Venda, especially the ones known as *zwsisi* and *zwithatha*.

LOGANIACEAE

128. **Strychnos pungens** Soler.

Mabogo 281

Mukwakwa

- a. The fruit is eaten fresh or dried. The dried fruit pulp is separated from the seeds and then stored in sealed clay pots for future use. During periods of food scarcity the powdered fruit pulp is cooked into a porridge known as *phwambwali* or *khwangwali* which is sour to the taste, or it may be eaten in powder form as *mugumo*. b. Dry wood is collected for making fire for both cooking and heating.

129. **Strychnos spinosa** Lam.

Mabogo 78

Muramba

- a. The fruit is eaten fresh or dried like that of *S. pungens*, but it is less popular. b. The fruit is often dried, crushed into powder, burnt and soaked to prepare *swanzwo*, which is used to bathe a person after a long illness. This is made to help him/her to regain liveliness and a shiny complexion. Leaves may also be used for this purpose. c. The fruit is normally boiled without being cracked and the infusion is used for making soft porridge that is given to a woman just after child-birth. This is said to stop any pains that may follow parturition. It is believed that the movements of the fruit in a pot when the water boils, resembles that of a foetus before it is expelled from the uterus.

130. **Anthocleista grandiflora** Gilg

Mabogo 282

Mueneene

- a. A decoction of the bark is used as a remedy for malaria, diarrhoea, diabetes, high blood pressure and venereal diseases. b. The stamped bark is soaked in water

together with seeds, especially cereal grains. This process is understood to make the grains produce abundantly when sown. It also makes them more resistant and hardy. The process is known as *u suka mbeu*. c. The large and smooth leaves are taken to cover millet grains soaked to encourage germination when malt is prepared. c. Old Venda people used to wear the leaves of this plant to cover their bodies, especially during ritual cults.

131. Nuxia floribunda Benth.

Mabogo 214

(= *Lachnopylis floribunda* (Benth.) C.A. Sm.)

Mulanotshi

The Venda name expresses the observed nutritional relationship of this plant with the bee (from *la* = to eat + *notshi* = the bee). This is because bees are attracted to the nectar produced by its flowers very much. The wood is harvested for fire as well as for fencing posts.

MALPIGHIACEAE

132. Sphedamnocarpus pruriens (Juss.) Szyszyl.

Mabogo 139

Azwiili, Tsimambe

a. The Venda name, *Azwiili*, is a medicinal one. It literally means "it is not a taboo". According to Venda tradition a mother should not sleep in the same hut as her husband when the baby is still young, because if she falls pregnant the baby will become ill. The use of this plant as a preventive measure protects the baby against the effects of any unexpected pregnancy when the mother and father sleep in the same hut. Pieces of roots are tied together and smeared with saliva from both parents before being cooked with mealie meal for making the soft porridge that is given to an infant. The roots are then hung on the wall or roof of the hut in which the parents sleep. b. The infusion from the root is an instant remedy for diarrhoea in children and adults. c. It is also taken, together with other medicines, for venereal diseases.

MALVACEAE

133. **Hibiscus praeteritus** R.A. Dyer

Mabogo 283

Makhulu wa mutudo

The Venda name indicates that this plant is considered to be so closely related to *Sida cordifolia* that it is taken as its ancestor (from *Makhulu* = granny + *wa* = of + *mutudo* = *Sida cordifolia*). a. The fibre is used for making sieves as well as for weaving household articles and cordage. b. Sticks are used to clean the hollows in stems of reeds.

134. **Hibiscus trionum** L.

Mabogo 13

Delete mukhwayo

The leaves are cooked and eaten with porridge. They are, however, rough and should be cooked with other vegetables or condiments. The name shows that it is considered as the rough type of *Corchorus tridens*. *Delete* is the name given to the latter species and *mukhwayo* has been derived from *hwaya*, which means rough.

135. **Sida cordifolia** L.

Mabogo 284

Mutudo

a. Fibre from this plant is used to weave a sieve for making beer. The name *Mutudo* literally means that which is used to sieve. The fibre is also used for weaving other articles used by the Venda people as well as for cordage. b. Sticks of this plant are used to clean the hollows inside reed stems before they are used for making musical instruments.

136. **Pavonia** sp.

Mabogo 192

Tshiteaduvha

The name *Tshiteaduvha* refers to the tendency of the stem tips of this plant to point in the direction of the sun. Fresh leaves are cooked and eaten as a vegetable.

MELIACEAE

137. **Entandophragma caudatum** (Sprague) Sprague

Mabogo 207

Munzhounzhou

a. The pericarp of the fruit is used for making playing instruments known as *zwihwilili* with which children like to play. b. The tree is favoured for its shade.

138. **Ekebergia capensis** Sparrm.

Mabogo 88

(= *Ekebergia meyeri* Presl ex C. DC.)

(= *Trichilia ekebergia* E. Mey. ex Sond.)

Mudouma, Mu \ddot{u} bvuma

a. The bark is used as a remedy for headaches as well as an emetic. b. This is one of the largest trees native to Venda and is usually left standing for its shade and beauty.

139. **Melia azedarach** L.

Mabogo 96

Muserenga

a. The fruit is edible but is less preferred because of its unpleasant flavour. b. The tree is commonly planted as a wind-break, for shade and as an ornamental.

140. **Trichilia dregeana** Sond.

Mabogo 91

Mutshikili

- a. The fruit content is cooked with vegetables as a condiment. b. The fruit pulp is also eaten like milk (sour). c. Cooking oil is made from the fruit pulp and then used for vegetables and other relishes. d. The oil made from the fruit pulp and seed is known as *mudo* and is used to polish women's leather clothes called *zwirivha* to keep them soft and pliable. The same oil is used to polish furniture and other articles made from wood. e. Often the bark infusion is used as an enema for general cleaning.

141. **Trichilia emetica** Vahl

Mabogo 93

(= *T. roka* Chiov. nom. illegit.)

Mutuhu

- a. The Venda name is related to short animal horns which are used to suck 'bad' blood through incisions made on the body. This is because the plant is used as an enema for general cleaning, gonorrhoea, syphilis, *divhu*, and stomach complaints. The plant is considered to be the source of an important enema treatment and is protected in areas where its medicinal use is popular. The bark is pounded and soaked in water for at least one day before use. For more effective application one or two seeds of *Cucumis zeyheri* may be added. It is sometimes mixed with a small amount of *Spirostachys africana* bark. b. The plant is used for shade as well as ornamental purposes.

MELIANTHACEAE

142. **Bersama tysoniana** Oliv.

Mabogo 285

Sando

The root, leaf and semiparasite of this plant are known to cause hatred towards any person who has been bewitched with this plant as an ingredient. Such a person will be hated, attacked and criticized by anybody whom he meets. The Venda name

(from *sanda* = to hate) gives some indication of this effect, and many people who know it, try to avoid contact with it.

MENISPERMACEAE

143. **Cissampelos torulosa** E. Mey.

Mabogo 125

(= *Menispermum capense* Thunb.)

Lukandululo

a. Leaves and flexible stems are boiled and the resulting decoction is taken for sore throats. b. The infusion of soaked leaf and stem is a remedy for dysentery and diarrhoea. c. It is believed by the Vhavenda that when a family member dies, all other members become spiritually contaminated. This process is termed *u kandea*. After the funeral, all relatives of the deceased enter the house or hut from which he/she died, or where he/she was placed before burial if he/she did not die at home. The stem and leaves of this plant are then soaked in water in a potsherd and everybody is sprinkled with the infusion on the inside and outside of hands and feet as he or she leaves the hut. The coiled stems and leaves of this plant are used as a sprinkling brush during the process. b. Leaves may be eaten but must be cooked together with other vegetables.

MIMOSACEAE

144. **Acacia albida** Del.

Mabogo 186

Muhoto

a. The bark is an ingredient of the medicines soaked in the clay pot called *thufhana*, the unfusion of which is used for making soft porridge for an infant. This soft porridge, which is the staple food for an infant from birth, is known as *tshiunza*. Its inclusion in this mixture is said to be beneficial because it keeps an infant's stomach conditions favourable. b. Its bark is also a remedy for venereal diseases when boiled and the decoction drunk.

145. **Acacia ataxacantha** DC.

Mabogo 122

(= *A. eriadenia* Benth.)

(= *A. lugardiae* N.E. Br.)

Muluwa

- a. The root bark is an ingredient of *dzovheyo*, taken by men as an aphrodisiac as well as for general body cleansing. b. The flexible saplings, decorticated and longitudinally split into thin band-like strips, are used for weaving baskets of different types and uses, e.g. winnowing and storage baskets. c. The thorny branches are also used for hedge fencing around cattle enclosures and homesteads. d. It is a good source of firewood.

146. **Acacia burkei** Benth.

Mabogo 150

(= *A. ferox* Benth.)

Munanga

- a. Straight branches are cut to suitable sizes and used as fencing posts and for building hut walls. The thorny branches are preferred for hedge fencing. b. The plant is threatened because of its excessive use as a source of fuelwood. It is considered to provide good fire for cooking as well as for heating.

147. **Acacia karroo** Hayne

Mabogo 286

(= *A. capensis* (Burm. f.) Burch.)

(= *A. hirtella* E. Mey.)

(= *A. horrida* Willd.)

(= *A. inconfugabilis* Gerstn.)

(= *A. natalitia* E. Mey.)

(= *A. reticulata* (L.) Willd.)

(= *Mimosa capensis* Burm. f.)

(= *M. leucacantha* Jacq.)

Muunga

- a. Although the pods may be eaten by people, they are mostly preferred by goats. b. The gum and bark are chewed and said to be sweet to the taste. Some compare the

gum to toffee. c. In the eastern parts of Venda, reportedly the area known as Malamba, it is said that the dry wood of this plant was cracked to obtain worms (probably insect larvae) called *malamba* which were fried and eaten. They are said to be so delicious that they were also collected in abundance to be taken to the headman of the area as a form of thanksgiving. d. The bark is a good source of fibre used for binding wattles around roof poles. The fibre is collected and hung in rolls around the roofs of huts during autumn for use during winter, the building season. Just before they are used, they are stuffed into a large clay pot and then boiled in water for a long time. This is said to make them pliable as well as more resistant to wood-borers, since boiling removes the sap or gum preferred by wood-borers. e. Thorns are anointed with magical powders and nailed down along the fence of the homestead to keep out evildoers such as witches and sorcerers. Sometimes they are placed with tips facing upwards. f. The wood is good for fire.

148. **Acacia nigrescens** Oliv.

Mabogo 287

(= *A. pallens* (Benth.) Rolfe
(= *A. passargei* Harms)

(= *Albizia lugardii* N.E. Br.)

Tshinangana

The name *Tshinangana* shows that the plant is considered to be a smaller variety of *Acacia burkei*, i.e. the use is diminutive. It is used for fencing posts, hedge fencing, and for firewood.

149. **Acacia tortilis** (Forssk.) Hayne

Mabogo 231

Musu

a. The gum and bark are chewed like chewing gum and are said to be sweet. b. Pods are collected for goats and sheep. c. The bark is a source of fibre used for binding wattles on roof poles as well as for building other structures. The fibres are, like those of *Acacia karroo*, boiled or soaked for making them pliable and to keep them resistant to wood-borers. d. The wood is collected for fire, but it is difficult because

of the presence of thorns. e. Owing to its thorny nature, it is preferred for hedge fencing.

150. *Albizia adianthifolia* (Schumach.) W.F. Wight

Mabogo 144

(= *A. fastigiata* (E. Mey.) Oliv.)

(= *Inga fastigiata* E. Mey.) Oliv.)

(= *Mimosa adianthifolia* Schumach.)

(= *Zygia fastigiata* E. Mey.)

Muvhadangoma, Muelela

The Venda name *Muelela* refers to the flat shape of the crown (from *-elela* = to flow). a. A weak decoction of the leaf and root bark is taken as a purgative as well as for toothache. b. The same decoction, when mixed with a similar decoction from *Landolphia kirkii*, *Solanum incanum* and *Ricinus communis*, is used as a remedy for a disease known as *nowa khulu* which is mostly suffered by women and is related to piles or haemorrhoids. The symptoms of this disease are pain in the rectum as well as blood flow with stools. c. An infusion of the bark, together with other ingredients, is also used by medicinal practitioners to help them remember, as well as dream about, the use and collection sites of the various medicines that they have come across. For this purpose the medicine is also mixed with portions of the vulture's heart. d. The other Venda name for this plant, *Muvhadangoma*, has been derived from *vhada* = to carve + *ngoma* = drum, because the wood is commonly used for carving the different types of wooden drums. The wood is also good for making doors, door frames, wooden plates, spoons, tool handles and other household utensils. Drumsticks are also made from the wood of this tree.

151. *Albizia brevifolia* Schinz

Mabogo 102

(= *A. parvifolia* Burtt Davy)

(= *A. rogersii* Burtt Davy)

Mupalakhwali

a. The root bark is included in an infant's medicines which are given to him either as an infusion or in soft porridge as a base. b. It is also used for restoring fertility in

women. c. The fruit and leaf decoction is taken for abdominal pains. d. The wood may be taken for firewood but is not recommended.

152. **Albizia versicolor** Welw. ex Oliv.

Mabogo 75

(= *A. mossambicensis* Sim)

Mutambapfunda, Muvhangoma

The name *Mutambapfunda* refers to the medicinal use of this plant and is derived from *tamba* = to wash + *pfunda* = face. a. The infusion of the bark is used for washing the face for troublesome eyes, shortsightedness as well as for bringing luck. b. This infusion, together with that from *Annona senegalensis*, is drunk as a remedy for gonorrhoea, syphilis and bilharzia. c. When soaked with many other roots of different plants, they make a mixture known as *dzovheyo* which is drunk as an aphrodisiac as well as for general cleansing and keeping the stomach conditions favourable. *Dzovheyo* is either made in water or *mageu* (Venda: *mabundu*, a fermented bran). d. The foamy infusion from the bark of this tree is also given to a person with the disease known as *divhu* or *devhu* which is suffered as a result of having had sexual intercourse with a woman who had committed abortion or experienced a miscarriage. It is believed to give him power and sustain him until the appropriate mixture is prepared. Because of this multitude of uses, the plant is generally referred to as *muri wa vhanna*, which literally means that it is a medicine for men. e. It is also an ingredient of protective medicines used to guard the homestead against witchcraft. f. The second name, *Muvhangoma*, has been derived from *vhamba* = to stretch + *ngoma* = drum. This name is related to the use of pieces of wood obtained from this plant to keep the hide stretched over the mouth of a drum. These pieces are nailed around the rim of the mouth of the drum (in ready-made holes) to serve as hooks which keep the hide tightly stretched. g. The wood is also used for carving drums, doors, door frames and other household utensils.

153. **Dichrostachys cinerea** (L.) Wight & Arn.

Mabogo 52

Murenzhe

a. Pieces of root are tied together and soaked to give an infusion which is applied to a new-born baby's fontanelle until it hardens. The purpose is to ensure that the bones of the skull will close properly and to hasten this closure. When certain diseases resulting in the resoftening of this area arise, e.g. the disease known as *ngoma* which is also characterized by diarrhoea, the medicine may once again be applied drop by drop. b. A decoction of the root bark is taken for toothache and stomach troubles. c. The infusion of the leaf and bark have been used for treating sore and painful eyes. d. Powder from the root and bark is also used for treating snake-bites and scorpion stings while that from the fruit is used for festering sores and scabies. e. Because the semi parasite growing on this plant is said to be used by witches in their night activities, it is used by traditional medicinal practitioners against them. f. The plant is also believed to indicate good or bad luck to herdboys. They split a branch from the point where it forks, and if it continues through a longer portion it indicates that they will find the cattle or goats, but if it breaks it shows hard luck. g. The hard and durable wood is used for making tool handles as well as for building courtyard walls and hedge fencing. h. It is an excellent source of wood for fire.

154. **Elephantorrhiza elephantina** (Burch.) Skeels

Mabogo 288

(= *Acacia elephantina* Burch.)

(= *A. elephantorrhiza* DC.)

(= *E. burchellii* Benth.)

(= *E. dinteri* Phillips)

(= *Prosopis elephantina* (Burch.) E. Mey.)

(= *P. elephantina* (DC.) Spreng.)

Musesekufa, Tshisesana, Gumululo, Gumbathakha

The first two Venda names indicate the similarity between this plant and *Peltophorum africanum*, which is purely based on morphological resemblances. The third name, *Gumululo*, relates to the use of the plant in a. washing a recovering patient to help him or her recover liveliness and complexion and to accelerate the

formation of blood in the body. The treatment is known as *u kumulula*, and also includes drinking the infusion of the root bark. b. The name *Gumbathakha* refers to its use in treating venereal diseases and promoting general blood purification. It is derived from *kumba* = to gather + *thakha* = (in this context) all dirt in the body. In this sense it is understood to gather all undesirable and harmful substances in the body and make them available for excretion. c. It is also used for regulation of menstruation when boiled (root) and drunk.

MORACEAE

155. *Ficus thonningii* Blume

Mabogo 49

(= *F. burkei* (Miq.) Miq.)

Muumo

a. Figs, called *nyumo*, are edible when ripe and are usually infested by insects when over-ripe. b. The latex, especially from fruits, is used for making bird-lime, or strengthening bird-lime made from the root bark of *Cassine aethiopica* and for making it more sticky and elastic. Sometimes the latex from *Tabernaemontana elegans* is added to coagulate and strengthen bird-lime prepared from this plant. b. A semiparasitic plant growing on *Ficus burkei* is required as an ingredient in the remedy for insanity. The plant is likely to be used for many other medicinal purposes, judging from removals of bark on most stems.

156. *Ficus ingens* (Miq.) Miq. var. *ingens*

Mabogo 205

Tshikululu

The fruit can be eaten when ripe but they seem to be preferred by animals, especially baboons and monkeys. No medicinal uses have been reported for this plant in spite of a wide range of uses recorded for other members of the Moraceae.

157. *Ficus sycomorus* L.

Mabogo 42

(= *F. exasperata* Vahl)

Muhuyu, Mutole

- a. Two types of edible fruit are commonly produced by this plant: the larger ones, called *mahuyu*, and the smaller, pinkish and sweeter ones, called *thole*. The two types are apparently produced at different periods of the fruiting season. Smaller and sweeter fruits may be eaten fresh or dried. The variation within this species, as well as the manner in which it produces fruit, requires further investigation.
- b. The decoction from the root bark is taken for chest troubles and colds in general.
- c. When included in medicines placed in the *thufhana* (a clay pot containing medicines, the infusion of which is added to the water used for making an infant's soft porridge), it is understood to organize an infant's stomach as well as prevent diarrhoea (the disease referred to as *u shela*).
- d. Fresh fruits are boiled and used as a pressing for the teats of cattle and goats to encourage lactation, probably because the fruit has substantial amounts of milky latex.
- e. The bark is a source of fibre required for cordage as well as for weaving a variety of materials, e.g. sieves used in making traditional beer.
- f. The plant is generally preferred and conserved for shade and beauty.

158. *Ficus* sp.

Mabogo 81

Mutambvu

- a. Ripe fruits are enjoyed by young people.
- b. The plant is used medicinally as suggested by extensive removal of bark where it grows near human settlements, but the use is still unknown.
- c. The tree is generally preferred for the shade it provides in fields and at resting places.

MUSACEAE

159. **Ensete ventricosum** (Welw.) E.E. Cheesm.

Mabogo 132

Mulolo

- a. Leaves and leaf sheaths are used as fibres for weaving baskets and other receptacles.
- b. They are also of temporary use for cordage and binding.
- c. Leaf sheaths are commonly folded for keeping snuff because of its porous nature.

MYROTHAMNACEAE

160. **Myrothamnus flabellifolius** (Sond.) Welw.

Mabogo 257

Mukangambanzhe, Mafavuka

The plant is commonly known as the resurrection plant and prefers dry and rocky mountainsides where it remains like a dead herb. In Venda it is known as *Mukangambanzhe* because, in its fresh state, it cannot be easily distinguished from the dagga herb, *Cannabis sativa*. The second name, *Mafavuka*, relates to its resurrection capacity because, when dry, it always looks like a dead plant, but after some few hours in water, it becomes fresh again.

- a. An infusion of boiled leaf is taken for colds and flu. More often the leaves and twigs are crushed and rolled in paper to be smoked like tobacco for colds, flu and other chest complaints.
- b. It is also sometimes smoked for nose-bleeding and scurvy.
- c. Some traditional practitioners use it together with other medicines to treat fainting, because, as they say, it also dies and resurrests.

MYRSINACEAE

161. **Maesa lanceolata** Forssk.

Mabogo 258

(= *M. angolensis* Gilg)

Muunguri, Mutibammela

- a. The Venda name *Mutibammela* refers to the use of the leaves of this plant to cover malt before beer-making (*tiba* = to cover + *mmela* = malt). The covering of

malt creates the heat that is needed for fermentation and germination. b. These leaves are of considerable use at initiation schools as a dressing. c. The plant is usually left to grow as an ornamental.

162. *Rapanea melanophloeos* (L.) Mez

Mabogo 146

(= *Myrsine melanophloeos* (L.) R. Br.)

Tshididiri

The bark is chewed or stamped and soaked or powdered for sore throats as well as for wounds.

MYRTACEAE

163. *Eugenia natalitia* Sond.

Mabogo 170

(= *E. rudatisii* Engl. & V. Brehm.)

Museri

The Venda name refers to the interwoven nature of its xylem strands in the wood. Because of its compact and strong wood, it is used for a. fire, b. furniture, household utensils, c. fencing posts, etc.

164. *Syzygium cordatum* Hochst.

Mabogo 15

Mutu

a. The fruit is eaten when ripe. b. A cold infusion of leaves is taken for stomach troubles, colds and fevers.

165. *Syzygium guineense* (Willd.) DC.

Mabogo 69

Mutumadi

This is considered to be related to *S. cordatum* in many respects, but is restricted to wet areas and has more watery fruit. The fruit is eaten by young people.

166. *Syzygium legatii* Burtt Davy & Greenway

Mabogo 56

Mutawi

- a. The stem and root is probably used for medicine. b. The fruit is generally gathered in large quantities and long distances have to be covered to find it. It ripens at the same time as *Mimusops zeyheri* and they are therefore usually collected together.

OCHNACEAE

167. *Brackenridgea zanguebarica* Oliv.

Mabogo 189

Mutavhatsindi

The root and stem bark as well as the leaf are used magically to protect homesteads as well as territories. The Vhatavhatsindi of the north-eastern Venda used this plant to protect their area against invaders. The name *Mutavhatsindi* was probably derived from the tribal name of these people. It is understood to magically discourage enemies from entering the treated area or homestead by making them feel frightened and unprepared for the invasion. The plant is tabooed from entering any homestead unless a certain ritual is performed. The same applies to the collection of medicines from the plant. Anybody who fails to observe the taboo may get into trouble. He may become sterile or something bad such as a fatal accident may happen to him. It is this horrible taboo that keeps most people away from it, even from knowing the plant. It is also prohibited from being used for purposes such as firewood and hedge fencing, building or wood carving. The plants growing in Venda appear to produce few seeds -- most flowers fall early.

OLACACEAE

168. *Ximenia americana* L.

Mabogo 82

(= *X. rogersii* Burtt Davy)

Muthanzwa, Dadzwangome

a. The fruit is eaten when ripe but it is more sour than that of *Ximenia caffra*. b. An infusion of the bark or powder of the root bark is used as a remedy for dysentery in children. The infusion is cooked with mealie meal for making soft porridge while the powdered medicine may only be sprinkled over it. c. It is also used as a remedy for diarrhoea and febrifuge in adults. d. The semiparasite or epiphyte associated with this plant is mixed with powder from *Salacia rehmanii* and *Pleurostylia capensis* to attract people who do not want to return home from their places of work far away. The medicinal (magical) powder is simply blown away with the accompaniment of proper incantations.

169. *Ximenia caffra* Sond.

Mabogo 5

Mutshili, Muthanzwa

a. The sour fruit is enjoyed by children when ripe. Only the pulp around the seed is eaten (i.e. sucked) after removal of the outer skin. The seed may also be eaten but it has an astringent taste which makes it less popular. b. Seeds are mostly preferred for making oil called *mudo* or *muvhamba* which is used for polishing women's leather clothes known as *zwirivha* (sing. = *tshirivha*) made from goat or other animal hide to keep them flexible and soft. It has to be a domestic animal, because Venda women do not wear clothes made from the hide of a wild animal. The oil is made by burning seeds and then crushing the kernels. Although *mudo* has an unpleasant smell, it is preferred because smell is believed to repel wild animals and dangerous beasts of prey, protecting women when they are out in the veld gathering wood and vegetables. c. A decoction of the root is taken for stomach troubles in both children and adults, especially when stools containing blood are discharged. The medicine is taken in half-cup doses twice or three times a day. It is also used as a febrifuge as well as a remedy for diarrhoea. Pieces of root are included in an infant's *thufhana* medicines. d. Branches of this plant were long preferred for hedge fencing but were

never used as firewood because it was tabooed, apparently because of its medicinal value.

OXALIDACEAE

170. **Oxalis semiloba** Sond.

Mabogo 113

Mukulungwane

Fresh leaves are chewed by a person suffering from a tart or sour feeling, usually after eating unripe fruit.

PAPILIONACEAE

171. **Crotalaria** sp.

Mabogo 84

Murundelatshotshi, Nduhushango

The Venda name *Murundelatshotshi* points to the relationship of this herb to ants which are always moving over and around it (*rundela* = to urinate on + *tshotshi* = ant). The other Venda name relates to the morphological similarity of this plant to peanuts (*nduhu* = peanuts + *shango* = earth or wild), but it also indicates that it is a wild species. a. The infusion of the root is taken for stomach pains. The fastest method, which could be followed in an emergency, is to chew the root. The root infusion is also used for alleviating all other stomach troubles as well as *divhu*. The root is included in the medicines used for making an infant's soft porridge food. b. It is also an ingredient of medicines for venereal diseases.

172. **Eriosema ellipticifolium** Schinz

Mabogo 260

Mundodzi

The fruit is edible when raw but has an unpleasant flavour which encourages people to cook or boil it first.

173. **Erythrina lysistemon** Hutch.

Mabogo 129

Muvhale

- a. The infusion of boiled, soaked or chewed bark is a remedy for toothache. Chewing is an emergency treatment. b. The tree is favoured as a wind-break and is generally planted as an ornamental. c. The wood is not considered to be an important source of firewood.

174. **Indigofera arrecta** Hochst. ex A. Rich.

Mabogo 123

Muswiswa, Mualigatsibi

The name *Mualigatsibi* has been derived from Sotho to literally mean that the plant is used for frying iron but the origin of this derivation is not clearly understood. a. An infusion of the root is given in teaspoonfuls three or four times a day to treat a disease known as *tshilala* or *ngoma* which is characterized by an ‘abnormal’ form of diarrhoea and a sunken fontanelle. It is also applied drop by drop to the fontanelle. It is often used as a prophylactic for making children immune to many other diseases as well as to accelerate the hardening of the fontanelle. b. The plant has been used as a dye for fibres and other woven materials including mats, anklets, bangles and garments.

175. **Millettia stuhlmannii** Taub.

Mabogo 215

Muangaila

The root bark is used magically to protect persons and homesteads against supernatural forces such as witchcraft and sorcery. It is said that in order to obtain any medicine from this plant, the person must perform a certain ritual. The person must be naked and should do it in the darkness, relating to the manner and time of witchcraft. This stops many people from tampering with the plant and probably played an important role in its protection and preservation.

176. *Mucuna coriacea* Bak.

Mabogo 261

Mulada

a. Crushed and boiled root fibres are used to treat toothache through pressing. b. The fruits have stinging hairs and children are warned against any contact with the plant. The hairs were notorious for their use among the people within the distribution range of the plant, more often for weaponry and disciplinary purposes than for medicine. Frequently one finds people talking about the stinging hairs of this plant with regard to ill treatment and suffering. It is for this reason that the plant is not only avoided, but also hated. Furthermore, for the same reason, people do not care for the plant enough to protect it. It is not unlikely that its physical appearance has been responsible for its own preservation.

177. *Mundulea sericea* (Willd.) A. Chev.

Mabogo 262

(= *M. suberosa* (DC.) Benth.)

(= *Cystisus sericeus* Willd.)

(= *Tephrosia suberosa* DC.)

Mukundandou

a. The root bark is an ingredient of the medicine applied into the body, through incisions, as a protection against witchcraft and other magical practices. The Venda name indicates that the plant is such a strong magical medicine that it can evade or subdue even the strongest power brought magically, hence its derivation from *kunda* = to conquer + *ndou* = elephant --- here referring to the strongest animal. The medicine is generally applied with animal and plant fats as a base. b. The wood is soft and unsuitable for use as a source of fire.

178. *Ormocarpum trichocarpum* (Taub.) Engl.

Mabogo 263

(= *O. setosum* Burtt Davy)

(= *Diphaca trichocarpa* Taub.)

Mugogodwane

This plant is also known as *Mukundandou* for reasons explained under *Mundulea sericea*. a. The plant is usually qualified as *Mukundandou* of the low-lying and dry

areas and can be a substitute for *Mundulea sericea* in its magical use to protect against witchcraft. The treatment is referred to as *u fara muvhili*. b. Fresh leaves are chewed or soaked and served as a vegetable in family imitation games. c. The wood is good for fire but its use is not strongly recommended.

179. *Pterocarpus angolensis* DC.

Mabogo 115

(= *P. bussei* Harms)

Mutondo

a. A decoction of the bark is taken to accelerate blood formation in men and women. In women it is commonly used after heavy menstruation, miscarriage or childbirth. In men, as also in women, it is used after any loss of blood. The same decoction, mixed with others in different combinations, is used to stimulate and regulate menstruation. The red, blood-like sap that oozes from the broken bark of the plant appears to be related to the medical use of the plant. b. A decoction of the bark is taken orally for piles. c. The wood is good for carving household materials such as doors, door frames, spoons, tool handles, furniture and other decorative objects.

180. *Vigna vexillata* (L.) A. Rich.

Mabogo 264

(= *Phaseolus vexillata* L.)

Musivha

Root tubers are eaten raw or cooked but they are preferred as a supplement to food, especially during periods of drought and food shortage. During the famine period known as *ndala ya matshona* this plant was of great nutritional importance.

PASSIFLORACEAE

181. **Adenia digitata** (Harv.) Engl.

Mabogo 197

(= *Modecca digitata* Harv.)

Dundu

- a. Fresh leaves are picked and cooked into a potherb. It is usually cooked as a spice when mixed with other vegetables. b. The stem and leaf infusion is given to a woman for delayed childbirth (to induce labour). It is said to be more effective when mixed with some animal products. c. The tuber is boiled in water to steam a patient with earache, especially when the ear has a boil or ulcer.

182. **Adenia spinosa** Burtt Davy

Mabogo 213

Tshivhuyudumbu

The infusion of the bark is used to bathe children to stimulate growth and strength of body. Infants washed with the infusion become fresh-looking and healthy like the stem of the plant which is thick.

PEDALIACEAE

183. **Dicerocaryum eriocarpum** (Decne.) Abels

Mabogo 154

(= *Dicerocaryum zanguebaricum* (Lour.) Merr.)

Museto

- a. Soaked leaves are frequently used as a soap substitute. b. The infusion from soaked leaf and stem is used to quicken the expulsion of hanging placenta in cattle as well as in humans. c. It is also considered an important medicine for the blood disease in cattle known as *mali* (black quarter evil). The infusion is administered orally.

PHYTOLACCACEAE

184. **Phytolacea octandra L.**

Mabogo 17

(= *P. americana* L. var. *americana* L.)

Vowa, Thebe

a. Leaves are cooked and eaten with porridge. The vegetable is not very tasty on its own and is usually cooked with other vegetables as a spice. b. Leaves and shoots are dried, burnt and mixed with snuff to serve as a stimulant as well as to give flavour. When used for this purpose, it is known as *mukango*.

POACEAE

185. **Cymbopogon validus (Stapf) Stapf ex Burtt Davy**

Mabogo 266

Benzwa

This is one of the most important thatch grasses, especially as an under-thatch where it is used as *bofhele*.

186. **Cynodon dactylon (L.) Pers.**

Mabogo 265

Tshitanzhela

Leaves and stems are boiled and used as a hot pressing on udders of cattle and goats for making them softer and to encourage the flow of milk. It is usually used immediately after the cow has calved when the udder is still hard.

187. **Phragmites mauritianus Kunth**

Mabogo 64

Lutanga

The straws are collected in abundance and used for a variety of purposes. a. It is preferred as an under-thatch for roofs and as cover for goat and sheep enclosures. It is first weaved into a mat known as *likhenya* before it is laid on the roof. Some

people prefer to use bundles of reeds as withies in the construction of roof frames. Sometimes it is cut into suitable sizes for making reed doors and courtyard enclosures. **b.** Because of the hollowed stems it is preferred for making musical instruments such as flutes, as well as smoking pipes, *etc.* **c.** Long and thick stems are used as fishing rods. **d.** When cut into strips the stems are used for weaving a variety of baskets, hats and other receptables.

188. **Sporobolus africanus** (Poir.) Robyns & Tournay

Mabogo 267

Mushingidzhane

a. This grass is important as a source of structural fibres for making different types of household utensils such as mats, baskets, receptacles, and amulets, for example anklets, hats, *etc.* **b.** Children tie the flexible stems (culms) across footpaths to trip one another.

POLYGALACEAE

189. **Securidaca longepedunculata** Fresen.

Mabogo 157

Mpesu

a. The infusion from soaked root bark is drunk as an aphrodisiac as well as for general purification of the blood. It may be chewed for emergency or convenient use, especially by boys and young men. **b.** The root infusion is also taken with other medicines as an emetic. **c.** Traditional practitioners maintain that it is used more for magical than for medicinal purposes. They say it is the one that convert magical powders into living familiars, especially into animals from which the mixing fat has been obtained. When used as an ingredient in *dzovheyo* it is believed to activate the other medicines and to form the characteristic foam normally observed in *dzovheyo*. **d.** A decoction of the root is also used as an anthelmintic as well as a purgative.

POLYGONACEAE

190. **Oxygonum dregeanum** Meisn.

Mabogo 194

Muthanyi

Leaves are cooked and eaten with porridge. Because of its bitter taste, the vegetable is usually cooked with others as a spice and normally only small amounts are needed.

PORTULACACEAE

191. **Portulaca oleracea** L.

Mabogo 268

Makhulu-wa-luvhisi

Cooked leaves are eaten as a vegetable. It is usually prepared in a mixture with other vegetables and rarely on its own.

PROTEACEAE

192. **Faurea saligna** Harv.

Mabogo 176

Mutango

a. The infusion of the leaf is a strong remedy for *divhu* or *devhu*, an illness suffered by a man who had sexual intercourse with a woman who had recently committed an abortion or had a miscarriage. It is combined with other medicines such as *Peddiea africana* and *Canthium mundianum* (root bark infusions). b. The wood is workable and durable.

RHAMNACEAE

193. **Berchemia discolor** (Klotzsch) Hemsl. *Mabogo 24*

(= *Phyllogeiton discolor* (Klotzsch) Herzog
Munie, Mukhukhuma

- a. The fruit is eaten fresh, or dried. When fresh it may be soaked in water or milk for making it more palatable. Dried fruit has been used by the Venda people to supplement their food supply during periods of famine. The fruit is stamped into powder in a mortar. This powder may be eaten as *mugumo* or cooked into some porridge known as *phwambwali* or *Khwangwali*, depending on the regional dialect.
- b. The wood is used for building as well as for fire.
- c. At times the bark is used as a dye through boiling with woven articles or fibres to give them a purplish colour.
- d. The wood has also been used as a cow-stick during fire-making by the Venda people.

194. **Berchemia zeyheri** (Sond.) Grubov *Mabogo 40*

(= *Phyllogeiton zeyheri* (Sond.) Suesseng.)
Munieniane

The vernacular name indicates that this is a smaller type of *Berchemia discolor* (*Munie*). It is the fruit and leaves that are smaller.

- a. The fruit can be eaten fresh or dried. When dried, it may be stamped into powder and mixed with mealie meal to be cooked into a porridge very similar to *phwambwali* (described above).
- b. The wood has more or less the same qualities as that of *B. discolor* regarding fire, furniture, building, etc.
- c. The bark is also a source of a purplish dye for fibre and woven materials.

195. ***Helinus integrifolius* (Lam.) Kuntze**

Mabogo 111

(= *H. ovatus* E. Mey. ex Sond.)

(= *H. scandens* (Eckl. & Zeyh.) A. Rich.)

Mupupuma

The leaf and stem are pounded and soaked in water to produce a soapy foam that has been used as soap. The Venda name relates to the formation of this foam when the plant is soaked.

196. ***Ziziphus mucronata* Willd.**

Mabogo 16

Mukhalu, Mutshetshete

The vernacular names point to the fact that the plant has piercing and tearing thorns. a. The fruit is edible but less preferred. It is only eaten out of hunger and when other fruits are scarce. b. In the treatment of nerve pains leaves are chewed and the juice swallowed, while the resulting paste is smeared in the palms of both hands and clapped simultaneously on both sides of the abdomen. Roots are also boiled and the decoction drunk to strengthen the treatment. Others prefer to grind the dried root in order to get the powder that can be sprinkled over soft porridge eaten for the same purpose. c. An infusion of the root bark is taken by women to enhance fertility. d. The thorny branches are preferred for hedge fencing around homesteads, cultivated lands, cattle and goat enclosures. e. It is a good source of firewood when dry.

ROSACEAE

197. ***Parinari curatellifolia* Planch. ex Benth. subsp.**

Mabogo 112

mobola (Oliv.) R. Grah.

Muvhula

a. Fruits are eaten when ripe. They are more delicious when stamped in water or milk. b. The people of Venda also make some alcoholic beverage from the fermented pulp of the fruit. c. The bark from the stem, together with the stem bark

of *Rauvolfia caffra*, is boiled and the decoction used for making soft porridge eaten for general cleansing related to pelvic pains, venereal diseases as well as cleaning of the kidneys.

198. **Rubus pinnatus** Willd.

Mabogo 59

(= *R. kingensis* Engl.)

(= *R. pappei* Eckl. & Zeyh.)

Munambala

- a. The fruit is edible and preferred by young people when ripe. b. A decoction of the root is taken for the relief of chronic diarrhoea and chest complaints.

RUBIACEAE

199. **Psydrax livida** (Hiern) Bridson

Mabogo 269

(= *Canthium huillense* Hiern)

(= *C. lividum* Hiern)

Muvhibvelashadani

- a. The fruit is eaten when ripe. b. The wood is good for fire and for carving certain tools.

200. **Canthium mundianum** Cham. & Schlechtd.

Mabogo 128

(= *Plectronia mundiana* (Cham. & Schlechtd.) Pappe)

Mutomboti

- a. The fruit known as *thomboti* is much enjoyed. b. The leaf, when boiled with that of *Faurea saligna*, is a remedy for the illness known as *divhu* (explained earlier).

201. **Canthium** sp.

Mabogo 3

Mulimakhoda

- a. The fruit is liked by all, especially when soaked in milk or water. b. Thorns are preferred for removing kernels from the marula seeds as well as for c. magical purposes.

202. **Cephaelanthus natalensis** Oliv.

Mabogo 143

Murondo

The fruit, called *thondo*, is collected and eaten fresh.

203. **Conostomium natalense** (Hochst.) Brem.

Mabogo 141

Ndilele

The root is used magically for all types of luck including job seeking, avoidance of confrontations with the police, court cases, etc.

204. **Fadogia tetraquetra** Krause

Mabogo 145

Tshiliso

Roots are boiled with others in milk and the decoction drunk for the disease called *tshiliso*, which is characterized by a variety of symptoms including vomiting. The Venda name of the plant refers to this disease.

205. **Gardenia volkensii** K. Schum.

Mabogo 100

Tshiralala

- a. The fruit is soaked in a clay pot (*thufhana*) and soaked with other medicines to produce an infusion used for making soft porridge for a baby (*tshiunza*). The plant is said to have a prophylactic effect against several diseases. An extract of the root

and leaf is given to a child who is old enough to be weaned to encourage him to forget about breast-feeding. The same applies to one who should be walking but forgets to keep on trying. The latter is provided with a walking stick so that he would remember. This stick is anointed with magical medicines of plant and animal origin. b. Some people pick leaves of this plant in order to forget some unpleasant things of the past. People say, "Tshiralala, I will tell others at home that I have seen you" or "I will pick your leaf on my way back", but they forget to do either of these. c. It is a great *phamba* (magico-medicinal mixture) for protecting the homestead and other enclosures. Short sticks are sharpened at one end and nailed down on both sides of all entrances into the homestead. It promotes forgetfulness and is preferred to deter witches, who will believe that they have become lost. Those who manage to enter the premises will either forget to go out and will be found the following morning, or forget their way out. b. The fruit is used for making *mituhu*, which are used to suck blood through incisions made on certain parts of the body. In this case two small holes are made on either end of the fruit, the outer one being the smallest. This outer opening is closed with paste or porridge after the initial sucking of the blood.

206. *Hyperacanthus amoenus* (Sims) Bridson

Mabogo 289

(= *Gardenia amoena* Sims)

Murombe

- a. The edible fruit called *thombe* is eaten fresh, either on its own, or soaked in milk or water. b. The wood is good for fire and hedge fencing.

207. *Rothmannia capensis* Thunb.

Mabogo 183

(= *Gardenia rothmannia* L.f.)

Murathamapfene

The wood is preferred for fire. The Venda name refers to its association with baboons, which are frequently found on its branches.

208. **Vangueria esculenta** S. Moore
Muzwilungala

Mabogo 44

The fruit is eaten fresh or dried, preferably with milk or water. The Venda name not only stresses that this species is related to *Vangueria infausta*, but also that it differs from it because of its long vertical branches.

209. **Vangueria infausta** Burch.
(= *V. tomentosa* Hochst.)
Muzwili

Mabogo 33

a. The fruit, called *mazwili*, is eaten fresh or dried. It is, like *mazwilungala*, also enjoyed with milk or soaked in water. b. The powdered root bark is an ingredient of the mixture prepared to enhance fertility in women. It may also be boiled for this purpose. c. Short sticks are sharpened on one side and nailed down all around the fence of a homestead. These are first treated with other "magical" powders to protect the homestead.

RUTACEAE

210. **Zanthoxylum capense** (Thunb.) Harv.
(= *Fagara capensis* Thunb.)
Munungu

Mabogo 175

Root and stem bark is used for treating sore throats. The bark is pounded into powder and licked. It is also used for other chest complaints, boils, pimples and blood poisoning.

211. **Vepris undulata** (Thunb.) Verdoorn & C.A. Sm.

Mabogo 217

(= *Vepris lanceolata* (Lam.) G. Don)

(= *Toddalia lanceolata* Lam.)

Muhondwa

The wood is strong and durable for making tool handles and hunting clubs.

SALICACEAE

212. **Salix mucronata** Thunb.

Mabogo 94

(= *Salix subserrata* Willd.)

Munengeledzi

a. The infusion from boiled root is taken to feed a baby from early childhood up to walking stage. The thick, black infusion is known as *ntswu*, and is generally considered to be not only very nutritious but also an important medicine which keeps the stomach conditions of an infant favourable. *Ntswu* feeding serves as a supplement to breast-feeding. Roots of other species such as *Syzygium guineense*, *Artobotrys monteiroae*, *Ficus sycomorus*, *Diospyros lycioides*, etc. are normally added to enhance the medicinal power and taste of the food. The food is kept in a small clay pot called *thufhana* to which water is regularly added. The water is boiled and then cooled before it is added to an infant's food, probably to kill germs. The clay pot remains covered with a clean cloth to keep out dust. New roots might be used when necessary. During the first three days the child is given an infusion from boiled leaves of *Amaranthus hybridus* to test whether *ntswu* food can be given to an infant. If an infant suffers from diarrhoea, he is given soft porridge instead of *ntswu*. b. The infusion from the root is given to a child as well as older people for burning stomach pains. The medicine is understood to cool down the stomach because the grows in the water. c. Powder from the bark of the root is an important ingredient of the magical mixture used, for protecting homesteads against witches and wizards. When such magical powder is used the whole homestead will appear (to the witch) as a dam or river with this plant growing along the banks.

SANTALACEAE

213. *Osyris lanceolata* Hochst. & Steud.

Mabogo 173

(= *O. abyssinica* Hochst. ex A. Rich.)

Mpeta

a. The name *Mpeta* means to fold or bend. The plant is used magically to discourage evildoers such as witches, sorcerers or any other person who enters the homestead with an undesirable attitude. It is believed to make such a person lose all strength and courage to harm others. Generally a stick of this plant is anointed with other magical powders and then placed across the entrance of the homestead in such a way that everybody who enters would go over it. The same is done for cattle and goat enclosures as well as all other important structures. When used in this way, it is called *luvhambo*. The use of the stick at the entrances does not only work against outsiders, but it also keeps the emotions and attitudes of inmates favourable, in that way encouraging peaceful co-existence with family members in the homestead. The same applies to its use regarding animal enclosures. This same type of stick, smeared with different combinations of magical powders is also used as a protective rod by people undertaking journeys through troublesome areas. The rod protects them against dangerous wild animals and enemies by way of discouraging them. When the rod is used for trips, it is called *thamu*. The root bark powder is an important ingredient of the mixture prepared for luck, especially for job-seekers, gamblers or anyone who wants to keep out of trouble. b. A thicker rod is used for stirring traditional beer (*Mahafhe*) so that people would drink peacefully, without quarrels or fights when drunk.

SAPINDACEAE

214. *Pappea capensis* Eckl. & Zeyh.

Mabogo 8

Murodololo, Muvundambado

The Venda name *Murodololo*, refers to the appearance of the fruits which look like red eyes partly covered by "eyelids". The second name indicates the hardness of the wood which can damage or break an axe (*vunda* = break + *mbado* = axe). a. The

fruit is eaten when ripe. **b.** Sap from the fruit is collected and allowed to ferment into a fairly potent wine. **c.** The infusion from crushed and soaked leaves is used as a remedy for painful eyes. **d.** The wood is used for fire.

215. Bequaertiodendron magalismontanum (Sond.) Heine & J.H. Hemsl.

(= *Chrysophyllum magalismontanum* Sond.) *Mabogo 46*

(= *Pouteria magalismontanum* (Sond.) A. Meeuse)

Munombelo

a. It is one of the most highly sought-after sources of fruit in the mountainous areas. Large quantities of fruit are collected during the ripening season. The juice is sucked from the pulp of the fruit. **b.** It is said that a fermented beverage is made from the fruit of this plant. **c.** The boiled root decoction is a remedy for abdominal pains. **d.** A semiparasite or lichen on this plant is used as an ingredient of medicines, prepared and burnt to invoke ancestral spirits during *malombo* (Vhasenzi) or *mbila* (Vhalemba) cults.

216. Mimusops zeyheri Sond.

Mabogo 77

Mububulu

a. The fruit is edible when ripe. This plant provides large quantities of fruit which are taken home and shared within and between families. The fruit is eaten fresh, soaked in milk or water. The surplus is dried and stored for future use. **b.** An alcoholic beverage is made from this fruit and enjoyed by young and old men and women. **c.** The root and stem bark is boiled and the decoction drunk for abdominal complaints.

SCROPHULARIACEAE

217. **Halleria lucida L.**

Mabogo 270

Mudula

- a. The fruit is edible when ripe but it is not very popular, especially in the low-lying and wetter areas. b. The infusion of the root is applied drop by drop (into the ear) for earaches.

SOLANACEAE

218. **Datura stramonium L.**

Mabogo 228

(= *D. tatula* L.)

Zavhazavha

- a. Leaves are dried, burnt and powdered with tobacco as a stimulant popularly known as *mukango*. b. It is used by some medicinal practitioners to treat insanity. c. A leaf infusion is a reliable remedy for venereal diseases.

219. **Physalis peruviana L.**

Mabogo 271

Murungudane

- a. Fresh leaves are sometimes cooked with other vegetables and used to relish porridge. The fruit is edible and much enjoyed. b. An infusion from the leaf is taken as an enema to treat abdominal disorders.

220. **Solanum aculeastrum** Dun.

Mabogo 130

Mushulwa

- a. Burnt and powdered fruit is sprinkled over toasted millet grains, which are eaten as an anti-emetic.
- b. The thorny branches are preferred for hedge fencing around dwelling places and gardens. It is sometimes planted to serve as a living fence.

221. **Solanum panduraeforme** E. Mey.

Mabogo 41

Mututulwa

- a. The contents of the fruit are applied to wounds.
- b. An infusion from roasted and pounded root is a remedy for indigestion in children and adults. Older people may chew the roasted root and swallow the juice for the same disease as well as for other stomach troubles.
- c. Mixed with other medicines it is used for the treatment of ulcers and as an anti-emetic.
- d. The decoction of the root is also used for toothache. The sap of the fruit is burnt on moistened cloth and the smoke inhaled for toothache.
- e. The fruit is used by young people in several games.

222. **Solanum nigrum** L.

Mabogo 27

Muxe

- a. Fresh leaves are cooked and eaten with porridge, preferably with meat or other vegetables.
- b. The infusion of the leaf is a remedy for malaria and dysentery.
- c. It is also used as a cholagogue.

STERCULIACEAE

223. **Dombeya rotundifolia** (Hochst.) Planch.

Mabogo 155

Tshiluvhari

- a. An infusion of the root bark is used to promote fertility and conception in women. It is believed that, because its flowering is very profuse, it can make a woman bear a

large number of children. b. The flowering period of this plant is understood to coincide with the beginning of summer by the Venda people, thereby serving as a seasonal indicator.

224. Hermannia glanduligera K. Schum.

Mabogo 221

(= *H. viscosa* sensu Burtt Davy non Hiern)

Manyamanye

The infusion of the root is added to bathing water to treat an infant with visibly expanded veins all over the body, particularly the abdominal part. The infusion is also used for making soft porridge for the patient as part of the treatment. It is interesting to note that the root of this plant appears to have a network of veins all over its surface, and it is probably because of this appearance that it was first used for this illness.

STRELITZIACEAE

225. Strelitzia caudata R.A. Dyer

Mabogo 133

Nambi

Leaves, leaf stalks and leaf sheaths are used for making fibre needed for weaving winnowing baskets and other types of receptables used by the Vhavenda.

THYMELAEACEAE

226. Passerina montana Thoday

Mabogo 169

Musanana

a. The bark is an important source of fibre for cordage. The fibre is used as a tie for many things together including roofs, wood stacks, grass for thatching, wattles, thatched roofs, ox whips, etc. b. Saplings with leaves may be used as a substitute for thatch grass, especially in times of shortage, or as a broom.

227. **Peddiea africana** Harv.

Mabogo 182

Gokodzalulimi, Muhoholodza

a. The root bark, together with leaves of *Fauria saligna*, is pounded and soaked to produce an infusion that is drunk for an illness known as *divhu* (described elsewhere). Consumption of this plant alone appears to be poisonous because it affects the tongue to an extent that it hangs out of the mouth, hence the Venda names *Gokodzalulimi* (from *kokodza* = to pull + *lulimi* = tongue) and *Muhoholodza*, which means "that which pulls". b. It is a good source of fibre used for cordage, weaving, ox-whips, etc. but it is toxic and does not have a pleasant smell. It should not be inhaled.

TILIACEAE

229. **Corchorus tridens** L.

Mabogo 19

Delete

Leaves are cooked into a smooth vegetable called *delete*. It is often also cooked with many other vegetables, reducing their rough texture and improving their flavour. The addition of bicarbonate of soda also improves it. It is sometimes added to other vegetables as a spice. Pregnant women prefer to eat this vegetable with the belief that it would help ease the birth of the child.

230. **Grewia bicolor** Juss.

Mabogo 2

(= *G. disticha* Dinter & Burret)

(= *G. kwebensis* N.E. Br.)

(= *G. miniata* Mast. ex Hiern)

Murabva

a. The fruit is eaten when ripe. The ripe dark-bluish fruit is commonly referred to as *madombi*, which points to the degree of ripening. b. Fresh leaves are boiled for making a tea. c. The infusion of the root bark is a remedy for diarrhoea in children. d. A decoction of the bark is taken for chest complaints. e. Branches were used as

bull-sticks during firemaking. f. Young men returning from initiation schools carry lashes obtained from branches of this plant. These lashes, sometimes called *midzhavhululo*, are used to frighten or flog the women and uninitiated men. g. The bark is a source of fibre for cordage.

231. **Grewia hexamita** Burret

Mabogo 91

(= *G. messinica* Burtt Davy & Greenway)

(= *G. schweickerdtii* Burret)

Murabva-pfene

The fruit is eaten but is not very popular because of its bitter taste. The vernacular name indicates that it is mostly eaten by baboons. It is for this reason that some people dislike the fruit as they believe that a baboon, having eaten enough, usually enjoys spoiling the remaining fruits on the tree.

232. **Grewia microthryrsa** (L.f.) Kuntze

Mabogo 50

Mupfuka

a. The fruit is edible and cherished most when fresh. b. Long and flexible branches are used as withies in the construction of roofs and courtyard fences.

233. **Grewia occidentalis** L.

Mabogo 7

Muparatsheni, Mizwilaminzhi

The Venda name *Mizwilaminzhi* is commonly used by traditional medicinal practitioners to indicate that it can be used in many ways to treat different types of illnesses (*mizwila* = paths + *minzhi* = many). Some claim that its multitude of uses in the medical field is indicated by the many longitudinal ribs on its stem. In this case there are four main uses because the stem is 4-angled (see also the 'Doctrine of Signatures' in Chapter 5). a. The fruit is eaten when ripe. It can be eaten fresh or dried with water or milk. b. Roots are boiled and the decoction is given to an expectant woman to hasten the onset of labour. c. The same medicine is an ingredient of that used for treatment of barrenness and impotency. d. The flexible

branches are used as wattles in building and lashes by herdboys. **e.** Firewood may also be obtained from this plant.

234. Grewia villosa Willd.

Mabogo 6

Mupunzu

a. The fruit is edible and enjoyed by both children and adults when ripe. **b.** The root has been reported as a medicine but details are not available. **c.** Straight branches are cut off by herdboys for use as lashes.

235. Grewia sp.

Mabogo 108

Mulembu

a. Leaves are cooked and eaten with porridge. Only fresh leaves are obtained and the vegetable is mostly cooked with others. **b.** The root is boiled with *Tribulus terrestris* (stem, root, and leaves), the popular copper wire that is worn for religious purposes, and a bronze coin (e.g. old South African half penny) as treatment for syphilis.

URTICACEAE

236. Pouzolzia mixta Solms

Mabogo 34

(= *P. hypoleuca* Wedd.)

Muthanzwa, Mulambadivhu, Murovhadembe

Fresh and tender leaves are cooked into a popular potherb called *muroho wa Muthanzwa*. It is usually cooked with other vegetables, especially *Obetia tenax*. **b.** It is an ingredient of the mixture of medicines soaked in a clay pot and taken daily by men for general body health. **c.** A decoction of boiled root is taken as a remedy for dysentery in children and adults. **d.** Mixed with other ingredients it is used as an enema for the disease known as *divhu*, hence the name *Mulambadivhu* (*lamba* = reject + *divhu*). It is known to be very effective against this disease, especially when

combined with an infusion from the root bark of *Trichilia emetica*. e. The name *Murovhadembe* is used when the plant is an ingredient in preparations for ailments caused by magic (e.g. through witchcraft), and is derived from *rovha* = break or weaken + *dembe* = magic.

237. **Obetia tenax** N.E. Br.

Mabogo 18

(= *Urera tenax* N.E. Br.)

Muvhazwi, Muugana, Muendanathavha, Gukhunya, Dyambila, Thanga

The name *Muendanathavha* refers to the habitat of the plant rather than to its use or appearance. The other name, *Dyambila*, points at the association of the plant with the black mamba (*Dyambila*), which is suspected to feed on its bark and is often found near it. a. Leaves are cooked and eaten with porridge. It is more delicious when taken with sour porridge (*mutuku*). The vegetable can easily be cooked with others, preferably *Pouzolia mixta*. b. An epiphyte or semiparasite growing on this plant is used for treating snake bite. c. The bark is a good source of fibre cordage, ox-whips, mats, thatching, game traps and sieves for straining beer. The only problem with using this plant is the presence of stinging hairs on its leaves and stem, which are softened by cooking.

VERBENACEAE

238. **Clerodendrum glabrum** E. Mey.

Mabogo 127

(= *C. rehmanii* Guerke)

Munukhatshilongwe

The infusion of leaves is taken and drunk as a remedy for sore throats, colds and related chest complaints. It is also an ingredient of magical medicines used for treating homesteads. It is believed that its smell repels pole cats and hyaenas which are popularly known to be familiars normally used by witches. It is also used to return the effects of witchcraft.

239. **Lantana rugosa** Thunb.

Mabogo 104

(= *L. salvifolia* Jacq.)

Tshidzimbambule

a. The purplish berries are eaten, mostly by young people. b. A paste from leaf and stem is applied to troublesome eyes, but it is very painful to the eye. c. The infusion of the leaf is drunk for incipient bronchial infection, while it is also used as an enema for abdominal complaints. d. The same infusion is used as an anti-emetic, especially when taken with milk for *tshiliso*, a disease which has vomiting and breathing problems as some of its symptoms.

240. **Lippia javanica** (Burm. f.) Spreng.

Mabogo 21

(= *L. galpiniana* Pearson)

(= *L. asperifolia* Rich.)

(= *Verbena javanica* Burm. f.)

Musudzungwane, Mukundamboho

a. The infusion of the leaf is drunk for coughs, flu and headaches. Leaves may be crushed and sniffed in emergency cases. b. It is also said to be important for general body sickness. c. The infusion is used as a prophylactic against malaria, dysentery and diarrhoea. d. Some people use it as an anthelmintic. e. The root is burnt and pounded to produce a medicine that is applied to cuts around sprained joints.

VITACEAE

141. **Rhoicissus tomentosa** (Lam.) Willd. & Drum.)

Mabogo 31

(= *Rhoicissus capensis* Planch.)

(= *Cissus capensis* Willd.)

Dyathoho, Ndirimhe dza daka

The name *Dyathoho* seems to stress the fact that the fruit is mostly preferred by monkeys, but it is also occasionally eaten by people in Venda. It is recommended that one should not eat too much of it, otherwise an ill feeling referred to as *dikitela*

results. The fruit is only eaten out of hunger because it is not very palatable and has a sickly sweet taste. The introduction of domestic grape plants into Venda agriculture has led to this plant being known as *Ndirivhe dza daka* which literally means that it is a wild grapes. The other name for this plant is *Tshitukisa dora* which refers to the fact that it can quench thirst when the fruit is eaten.

242. *Rhoicissus tridentata* (L. f.) Willd. & Drum.

Mabogo 273

(= *Cissus cuneifolia* Eckl. & Zeyh.)

Murumbulambudzana

- a. Fruits are edible but are less sought after.
- b. Roots are soaked, together with other medicines in a clay pot known as *thufhana* and the infusion is used for making soft porridge, called *tshiunza*, given to a baby from birth until he can eat harder porridge. The medicine is understood to keep the conditions in an infant's stomach stable and favourable.
- c. Roots are an important ingredient of *dzovheyo* as a result of the aphrodisiac properties of the plant.

243. *Rhoicissus* sp. Planch.

Mabogo 114

Bopha-vhafu

- a. The leaves are edible when cooked as a vegetable, but most people avoid it because of its association with corpses. They think that it might have grown vegetatively from a grave after it had been tied around a corpse and that it might have developed by taking up products from a decomposed body of a human being.
- b. The vernacular name indicates the use of the flexible stems of this plant to bind corpses when they are buried. The stems keep the clothes and/or hide used to cover the corpse securely fastened (from *vhofha* = to bind + *vhafu* = dead people).
- c. The leaf and root infusion is given to a woman who fails to conceive. The treatment is known as *mbuso* (meaning to restore). It is usually combined with other medicinal and magical plant and animal products, especially when many other causes, including witchcraft, are suspected.
- d. A semiparasite or orchid growing on this plant is used magically to protect a homestead against witchcraft.
- e. The flexible stems are used for binding wood and other materials.

ZYGOPHYLLACEAE

244. *Tribulus terrestris* L.

Mabogo 274

Tsetwana

The name has been derived from *Tseto* (*Tribulus zeyheri*) by referring to it as a diminutive. a. Fresh leaves are sometimes included in the cooked vegetables used for relishing porridge. b. Root, stem and leaves are used for treating syphilis.

245. *Tribulus zeyheri* Sond.

Mabogo 117

Tseto

Fresh leaves are cooked and eaten with porridge. The herb is usually cooked with other vegetables and is commonly used during periods of food and vegetable shortage.