

# Fact Sheet: MOPANE

*Colophospermum mopane*

## Common Names

**Oshiwambo:** Omusati  
**Otjiherero:** Omutati  
**Silozi:** Mopani  
**Afrikaans:** Mopanie

## Introduction

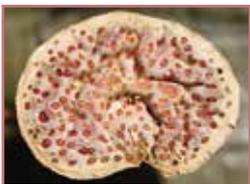
A deciduous shrub or tree with bifoliolate leaves resembling the wings of a butterfly and smelling of turpentine. Flowers are small green-yellow and the fruit are kidney-shaped leathery pale brown pods (Curtis & Mannheimer, 2005).



## Traditional knowledge

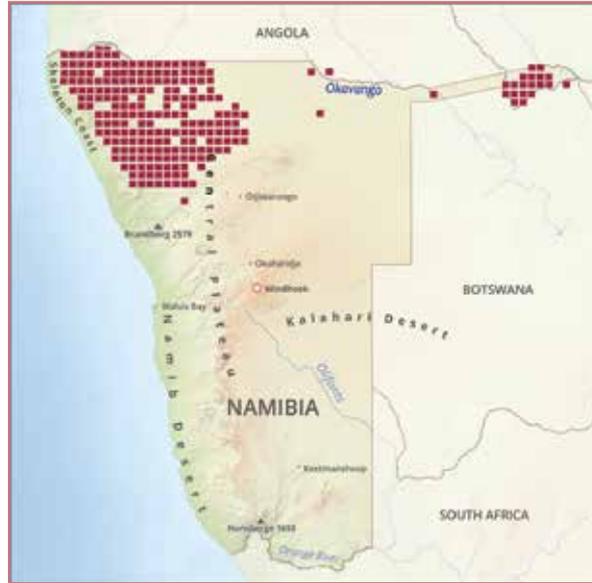
The fruit are edible and utilised as a famine food and the leaves serve as fodder in times of grass scarcity. The tree hosts the larval stage of the mopane worm, which in turn are an important part in local diets (Curtis & Mannheimer, 2005).

Recently the essential oil distilled from resin on the seed pods has gained importance in cosmetic products



◀ Spots of resin on Mopane seed pod.

## Status Namibia: protected



## Distribution

Mopane is distributed in areas that have a variety of soil types, but mainly survives on alkaline soils, receiving low to moderate annual rainfall ranging from 400 mm to 800 mm.

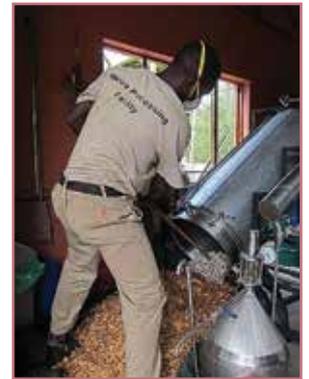
◀ (Irish, 2018)

## Harvesting and Processing

A supply chain for Mopane seed has been developed in the Otjiu-West, Okongoro and Orupupa conservancies in the north-western parts of Namibia since 2006. Mopane seeds are collected, packed in bags, labelled and transported to the near-by Opuwo Processing Facility, where they are steam distilled to extract the essential oil from the small spots of resin on the seeds (National Botanical Research Institute). The resource is abundant so that sustainability and volume of supply are given. Essential oils are exported to cosmetic companies regionally while the supply to European companies is under development.

MSDS: available from KCINPT

INCI: COLOPHOSPERMUM MOPANE EXTRACT



## References

Photos: K. Nott

Curtis, B. & Mannheimer, C., 2005. *Tree Atlas of Namibia*. Windhoek: National Botanical Reserach Institute.

Irish, J., 2018. *Namibia Biodiversity Database*. [Online] [Accessed Nov 2019].

National Botanical Research Institute, 2017. *Essential oils: Mopane*. [Online] [Accessed Nov 2019].



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