

Fact Sheet: MORINGA

Moringa oleifera

Common Name

English: Horseradish tree
German: Behenussbaum / Behenbaum / Bennuss

Introduction



▲ Cultivated *Moringa oleifera* in Northern Namibia

M. oleifera is a fast-growing evergreen tree of 10–12 m height, native to India. The leaves are mostly tripinnate and up to 45 cm long. The flowers are fragrant and bisexual. The fruits are pendulous linear three-sided pods 20 to 50 cm long. The pods can each contain up to 26 seeds and take approximately three months to mature after flowering (Chukwuebuka, 2015).

M. ovalifolia (sprokiesboom) occurs in the north-western parts of Namibia. This species is near-endemic and protected in Namibia and not utilised commercially (Curtis & Mannheimer, 2005).

Used Plant Parts

M. oleifera is generally known for its water-purifying properties using its seeds. All parts of this tree are used in a myriad of different food, feed, sanitary, medicinal and cosmetic products. The flowers are used in various teas and oil is extracted from the seeds. Dried and powdered leaves as well as seed cake powder are used as food supplements (Kwaambwa, et al., 2012) (Steyn, 2019). Moringa is high in nutritional

value, particularly Vitamin B and C as well as several amino acids and minerals and is therefore used to combat malnutrition.

Status Namibia: invasive

Habitat and cultivation

M. oleifera is adapted to a wide range of soil types but performs best in well drained clay or clay loam without prolonged waterlogging and prefers a neutral to slightly acidic soil. It is drought tolerant but yields much less foliage where it is continuously under water stress. (Orwa, et al., 2009). The yield of cultivated trees depends on season, variety, fertilisation and irrigation (Ramasubramania, et al., 2016). Moringa is a fast-growing tree of which the flowers, leaves, pods and stems can be harvested several times per year. Harvesting and processing is mostly done by hand in Namibia (Steyn, 2019).



▲ Fresh Moringa leaves



▲ Dried Moringa leaves



▲ Moringa seeds



▲ Moringa leaf tea

Potential for development

Moringa has huge potential as ingredient in food and feed supplements, health products and cosmetic products in Namibia as well as for export (Steyn, 2019) (Kwaambwa, et al., 2012).

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