

Good indigenous trees and shrubs to plant in gardens, schools, lodges, and municipal areas in the central parts of Namibia in preference to exotic / alien species

Namibian Invasive Alien Species Working Group

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This document consists of three Tables. Table 1 lists tree species that are indigenous to Namibia, are drought resistant, have no thorns, can grow larger than 5 m high, can grow into a nice tree shape and are not known to crack buildings if planted in close proximity (which may happen if a species of the wild Fig (*Ficus*) species is planted too close to buildings). They all have some degree of frost resistance. Those indicated with +/- are best planted higher up on a hill (as cold air tends to descend and hang in the valleys), protected when young and if possible, sheltered by a building or frost resistant tree situated more uphill (to protect the crown from 'frost burn'). Most indigenous trees in nature in arid and semi-arid areas grow fairly slowly. However, under garden conditions when a good-sized planting hole is prepared with bone meal, compost and manure, and when the saplings are watered monthly through the dry season, most trees will be medium to fast growers. It is well worth investing in a large well-prepared planting hole! Some species, e.g. Shepherd's Bush (*Boscia albitrunca*) may start off slowly with strong root development before significant growth above ground occurs. Some trees that are evergreen in northern Namibia may be semi-deciduous in the central highlands in and around Windhoek.

Table 1: Indigenous thornless trees to the central regions of Namibia that are drought resistant, can grow to at least 5 m in height, and are generally frost resistant							
Common name	Scientific name	Height (m)	Evergreen	Good shade tree	Frost resistance	Mostly not "Messy"	Noteworthy
Shepherd's tree	<i>Boscia albitrunca</i>	<10	✓	✓	✓	✓	Slow growth at first, but then faster
Ringwood tree	<i>Maerua schinzii</i>	3 - 7	✓	✓	✓	✓	Attractive growth form
Wild olive	<i>Olea europaea</i> subsp. <i>cuspidata</i>	5 - 8	✓	✓	✓	✓	Slow growth at first, but then fast
Wild ebony	<i>Euclea pseudebenus</i>	3 - 9	✓	✓	✓		Graceful, slow - medium grower
Worm-cure Albizia	<i>Albizia anthelmintica</i>	2 - 10		+/-	✓	✓	Striking early flowering attracts insects & birds, attractive growth form
African wattle	<i>Peltophorum africanum</i>	3 - 12	+/-	✓	+/- to ✓		Striking yellow flowers
Namibian resin tree	<i>Ozoroa crassinervia</i>	4 - 9		+/- to ✓	✓	✓	Attractive, slow growth at

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Kalahari apple-leaf, Appelblaar	<i>Philenoptera nelsii</i> subsp. <i>nelsii</i>	3 - 12		+/-	+/-		Slow grower, striking purple flowers on female trees
Mountain kirkia, Bergsering	<i>Kirkia acuminata</i>	5 - 13		+/- to ✓	+/-		Fast grower
Bushveld saffron	<i>Elaeodendron transvaalense</i>	< 10	+/- to ✓	✓	✓		Prefers lime soil, fast grower
Sausage tree	<i>Kigelia africana</i>	2 - 15		+/-	+/-		Striking flowers, iconic fruits
Marula	<i>Sclerocarya birrea</i> subsp. <i>caffra</i>	< 10		+/- to ✓	+/- to ✓		Fast grower, edible fruits if female tree, grows taller in the north
Kudu bush	<i>Combretum apiculatum</i> subsp. <i>apiculatum</i>	2 - 6		✓	✓		Nice autumn colours
Karee	<i>Searsia lancea</i>	3 - 6	✓	+/-	✓	✓	Fast grower, avoid over watering (aphid infestations)
Satin-bark corkwood	<i>Commiphora tenuipetiolata</i>	1 - 12			✓	✓	
Bird plum	<i>Berchemia discolor</i>	3 - 12		✓	+/-		Attracts birds and insects (may attract bees, edible fruits)
Namib coral-tree	<i>Erythrina decora</i>	<8			✓	+/_	Red flowers
Phantom tree, sprokies boom	<i>Moringa ovalifolia</i>	3 - 8			+/-	✓	Iconic shape and bark
African Star-chestnut	<i>Sterculia africana</i>	6 - 12			+/-	✓	Slow growth, iconic stem

Table 2 lists tree species that have the same attributes as those in Table 1, but they have thorns.

Table 2: Indigenous thorny trees to the central regions of Namibia that are drought resistant, can grow to at least 5 m in height, and are generally frost resistant							
Common name	Scientific name	Height (m)	Evergreen	Good shade tree	Frost resistance	Mostly not "Messy"	Noteworthy
Camel-thorn	<i>Acacia (Vachellia) erioloba</i>	<20		✓	✓	✓	Iconic
Sweet-thorn	<i>Acacia (Vachellia) karroo</i>	<10		✓	✓		
Kalahari acacia	<i>Acacia (Vachellia) luederitzii</i>	<10			✓		
Red umbrella-thorn	<i>Acacia (Vachellia) reficiens</i>	<7			✓		
Umbrella-thorn	<i>Acacia (Vachellia) tortilis</i>	<11		✓	+/-	✓	Slow grower, umbrella-shaped crown
Ana tree	<i>Faidherbia albida</i>	10-20	+/-	✓	+/-	✓	
Buffalo-thorn	<i>Ziziphus mucronata</i>	<7			✓		Seeds attract birds
Purple-pod terminalia	<i>Terminalia prunioides</i>	2-8			✓	+/-	Often multi-stemmed
Greenhair tree	<i>Parkinsonia africana</i>	< 5			✓		
Tall common-corkwood	<i>Commiphora glandulosa</i>	2 - 10			✓	✓	Live fence, gum toxic
Bottle tree	<i>Pachypodium lealii</i>	4 - 6			✓		Iconic succulent stem, latex poisonous, striking flowers in spring
Jacket plum	<i>Pappea capensis</i>	< 5	+/- to ✓		✓	✓	Edible fruit on female trees

Table 3 lists small trees and shrubs, including succulent species, that are excellent for filling gaps in gardens while maintaining a view, planting under large trees, and attracting butterflies and birds into the garden. Shrubs are best planted in clusters of three to five plants of mixed species.

Table 3: Small trees and shrubs indigenous to the central regions of Namibia that are drought resistant, typically grow from 2-4 m in height, and are generally frost resistant

Common name	Scientific name	Height (m)	Evergreen	Good shade tree	Frost resistance	Mostly not "Messy"	Noteworthy
Quiver tree	<i>Aloe dichotoma</i>	<5	✓		✓	✓	Feature succulent
Windhoek aloe	<i>Aloe littoralis</i>	<3	✓		✓	✓	Feature succulent
Blue sourplum	<i>Ximenia americana</i>	2-3	✓		+/-		Thorny, edible fruits – attracts birds
Yellow-bark acacia	<i>Acacia (Senegalia) erubescens</i>	<5			✓		Thorny
Candle-pod acacia	<i>Acacia (Vachellia) hebeclada</i>	<6			✓		Thorny
Mountain-thorn acacia	<i>Acacia (Senegalia) hereroensis</i>	<7			✓		Thorny
Black-thorn acacia	<i>Acacia (Senegalia) mellifera</i>	<5			✓	✓	Thorny, invasive
Cork bush, silver bush	<i>Mundulea sericea</i>	<3			✓	✓	Toxic, Violet/mauve flowers
Blue-leaved corkwood	<i>Commiphora glaucescens</i>	<2			✓	✓	Grows taller in the north
Fire-thorn corkwood	<i>Commiphora pyracanthoides</i>	0.5-2.5			✓	✓	Thorny, live fence
Lavender croton	<i>Croton gratissimus</i>	<5	+/-		✓		Leaves with aromatic oil
Bitter karee	<i>Searsia (Rhus) marlothii</i>	<5	✓		✓	✓	
Kobas	<i>Cyphostemma currorii</i>	<5			✓	✓	Toxic
Two-coloured raisin-bush	<i>Grewia bicolor</i>	2			✓	✓	Edible fruit, attracts birds & insects
Velvet raisin bush	<i>Grewia flava</i>	2			✓	✓	Edible fruit, attracts birds & insects
Rough-leaved raisin-bush	<i>Grewia flavescens</i>	2-3			✓	✓	Edible fruit, attracts birds & insects
Wild pear	<i>Dombeya rotundifolia</i>	3-5			✓	✓	Attractive white flowers
Common guarri	<i>Euclea undulata</i>	<4	✓		✓	✓	Dense bush
White puzzle-bush	<i>Ehretia alba</i>	<4	+/-		✓	✓	
Simple-leaved rhigozum	<i>Rhigozum brevispinosum</i>	<3			✓	✓	Golden yellow flowers. Thorny

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Common name	Scientific name	Height (m)	Evergreen	Good shade tree	Frost resistance	Mostly not "Messy"	Noteworthy
Trumpet-thorn	<i>Catophractes alexandri</i>	1-3			✓	✓	White to pinkish trumpet flowers
Camphor bush	<i>Tarchonanthus camphoratus</i>	2-4	+/- to ✓		✓	✓	Fast growing, good for screening
Knobbly bushwillow	<i>Combretum mossambicense</i>	< 3		✓	+/- to ✓		Climbing shrub suited for trellis
Tree cotton	<i>Gossypium herbaceum</i>	2			✓		Cotton, attracts birds, trellis
Pink wild cotton	<i>Gossypium anomalum</i>	1.5			✓		Cotton, attractive purple flowers
Milkbush	<i>Euphorbia mauritanica</i>	0.5 - 1	✓		✓		Toxic, fast grower