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Maclura excelsa

[Synonyms : *Chlorophora alba*, *Chlorophora excelsa*, *Milicia africana*, *Milicia excelsa*]

FUSTIC is a deciduous tree. Native to tropical Africa it has oval green fruit with many small brown seeds.

It is also known as African oak, African teak, Counter wood, Fustic wood, Iroko, Iroko fustic tree, Mbang, Mvule, Mvuli, *Odum* (Twi), Old fustic, and Rock elm.

The flowers emit a vinegar-like smell when they wither and drop.

Excelsa means ‘tall or high’.

In west Africa this is one of the trees that is hollowed out and shaped to make dugout canoes.

The latex from the bark was once tapped and used as a rubber adulterant.

The bark itself has not only been used for roofing homes, but also for tanning leather and dyeing cloth.

Dark greenish-brown fustic wood is used widely commercially. It is hard and heavy, tough and termite-proof and often provides an alternative to oak (*Quercus*) or teak (*Tectona grandis*). It is used today for joinery, turning and carving, as well as for dock construction, piling, cruiser decking, buildings, stairs, flooring, vats and furniture – the latter particularly for the garden.

Medicinally, the bark has been used locally to treat coughs.