

Khaya ivorensis or *K. anthotheca* or *K. grandifolia*



Khaya is a genus of seven species of trees in the mahogany family Meliaceae, native to tropical Africa and Madagascar. All species become big trees 30-35 m tall, rarely 45 m, with a trunk over 1 m trunk diameter, often buttressed at the base. The leaves are pinnate, with 4-6 pairs of leaflets, the terminal leaflet absent; each leaflet is 10-15 cm long abruptly rounded toward the apex but often with an acuminate tip. The leaves can be either deciduous or evergreen depending on the species. The flowers are produced in loose inflorescences, each flower small, with four or five yellowish petals and ten stamens. The fruit is a globose four or five-valved capsule 5-8 cm diameter, containing numerous winged seeds.

The timber of *Khaya* is called **African mahogany**, the only timber widely accepted as mahogany besides that of the true mahogany, of the genus *Swietenia*. *Khaya senegalensis*, also known as the African dry zone mahogany or Mubaba in the Shona language is also used for its herbaceous parts. In west Africa, Fulani herdmen prune the tree during the dry season to feed cattle. In addition, the bark of *K. senegalensis* is often harvested from natural populations as well as plantations and used to treat many diseases. The seeds of *K. senegalensis* have an oil content of 52.5%, consisting of 21% palmitic acid, 10% stearic acid, 65% oleic acid, and 4% "unidentifiable acid"

The durable reddish-brown wood of *K. anthotheca* is used for dug-out canoes or makoros and as a general beam, door frame and shelving timber which is termite and borer resistant.

Some drum companies, as Premier, used Khaya wood for making their drums in the mid-70s. However, it was too expensive, so they switched to using other materials such as maple and birch.