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The Eben Tree of Old Calabar. (*Pachylobus edulis*, G. Don.)

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Source: *Bulletin of Miscellaneous Information (Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew)*, Vol. 1906, No. 5 (1906), pp. 172-173

Published by: Springer on behalf of Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4111299>

Accessed: 26-06-2016 07:40 UTC

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## XXVIII.—THE EBEN TREE OF OLD CALABAR.

(*Pachylobus edulis*, G. Don.)

The Eben tree is cultivated in various parts of Old Calabar for the sake of its fruits, the outer portion of which is eaten after being boiled or roasted. Examples of these fruits were first sent to Kew with this name by the Rev. Hugh Goldie in January, 1888. These were collected in Creektown. The writer's attention was directed to them, ten years later, by the Keeper of the Museum at Kew, who suggested that on his return to West Africa the writer should furnish material adequate to admit of accurate determination. At the time this suggestion was made the fruits were believed to belong to a tree of the natural order *Laurineae*. The specimens the writer was able to supply were taken from an Eben tree in the Botanic Garden at Old Calabar. They reached Kew in 1898, and showed that the Eben tree is *Pachylobus edulis*, G. Don (Natural Order *Burseraceae*). In September, 1905, Mr. McLeod, of the Forestry Department, Southern Nigeria, sent another specimen collected at Uwet, on the Calabar River. There were no fruits with the Uwet specimen.

The species has been figured in *Hooker's Icones Plantarum*, t. 2566-7 (1899), where its synonymy and distribution are stated to be as follows:—

“ *Pachylobus edulis*, G. Don, Syst. ii., p. 89.

*Canarium edule*, Hook. f. in Hook. Niger Flora, 285.

*Canarium edule*, Hook. f. in Hiern Cat. Afr. Pl., Welw. i., 127.

*Canarium Mubafo*, Ficalho in Bol. Soc. Geogr. Lisbon, Ser. 2, p. 611, et Pl. Ut. Afr. Portug., p. 115.

*Pachylobus Saphu*, Engl. in Engl. & Prantl. Naturl. Pfl., Fam. iii., 4, p. 243.

*Canarium Saphu*, Engl. Jahrb., xv., p. 99.

“ West Tropical Africa—

Island of St. Thomas ; G. Don.

Old Calabar ; Thomson.

Cameroons ; Mann, Preuss, Bucholz.

Cuzengo ; Welwitsch, 4482, 4483.

Wathen Station, or Ngombe, 34 miles below Stanley Pool ; Bentley.

“ *Canarium Schweinfurthii*, Engl., a genuine *Canarium* having a thick, exceedingly dense and hard endocarp, has been confused with *Pachylobus edulis*, G. Don. Both trees yield an edible fruit and bear similar or perhaps in some districts the same name, and the leaves are sufficiently alike to deceive a superficial observer. The first-named is evidently very wide-spread, ranging from near the West Coast in Angola, eastward to the lakes and northward to Uganda.

“ *Pachylobus edulis* is cultivated from St. Thomas and the Cameroons to the Congo at least, and it is figured here in consequence of Kew having received from the Rev. W. H. Bentley,

of the Congo Baptist Mission, fruits purporting to represent the wild and cultivated varieties of the same tree—in reality the fruits of the two trees under consideration. Numerous specimens from different localities seem to establish the specific identity of *Pachylobus Saphu* with *P. edulis*. Indeed, Don's original specimen of the latter is labelled 'Safu,' and Don stated the fruit was a native of St. Thomas, and its fruit was sold in the island under that name."

"Eben" is the Eifik name, although Thomson, with the specimen referred to in the *Icones*, from Old Calabar (1863), does not mention the name, nor does he make any remark as to the uses to which it is put. Mr. McLeod gives the name "Eban" with his specimen (1905).

The writer observed the tree on the way to Uwet overland from Old Calabar; at Okuni on the left bank, and at Ikum on the right bank of the Cross River; but he does not remember having seen it at any place visited westward of the Old Calabar district.

The so-called African Elemi has been attributed to this species. See Planchon and Collin in "Les Drogues Simples," ii., 358, *Canarium edule*, Hook. f.; Moloney, "Forestry of West Africa," *Canarium edule*, Hook. f., "Mpafu" or "Mubafo"; Hiern., "Catalogue of Welwitsch's African Plants," i., 127 (stated here to also yield an oil), *Canarium edule*, Hook. f., more especially with reference to the specimens named "Mutafo" or "Nbafo"; but these statements, together with the note under "'Mpafu' tree of Tropical Africa," *Canarium* sp., in Kew Report, 1880, p. 50, doubtless apply to *Canarium Schweinfurthii*, Engl., the "Mpafu" of Uganda, "Mbafu" of Tanganyika, "Mupafu" of Mukenge, and "Mubafo" of Angola, as in Engler, "Pflanzenwelt Ost-Afrikas," B. 199, where the matter relating to the Elemi and oil seems to be, perhaps for the first time, accurately put. There are several specimens of *Canarium Schweinfurthii* in the Museum which bear out this view.

J. H. H.

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## XXIX.—MISCELLANEOUS NOTES.

Mr. WALTER HACKETT, Foreman of the Tropical Department of the Royal Botanic Gardens, has been appointed Assistant Curator of the Botanic Garden, Liverpool. Mr. Hackett entered Kew as a young gardener in September, 1897. He was promoted Sub-foreman of the Tropical Department in January, 1899, and Foreman of the same Department in 1901. The vacancy caused by Mr. Hackett's resignation has been filled by the transfer of Mr. C. P. Raffill from the Temperate House, while Mr. William Taylor, Sub-foreman in the Tropical Department, succeeds Mr. Raffill as Foreman of the Temperate House.

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WILLIAM MATHEWS, M.A., F.R.G.S. — In June, 1901, Mrs. Mathews communicated to Kew the desire of her husband