

HAWAAN FOREST

by BILL DUTHIE

At the mouth of the Mhlanga River (umhlanga is the Zulu word for reed) not 12 km to the north of the City of Durban, lies a complex of ecological areas in a relatively unexploited state and which give a glimpse of what the Natal coastal dune forest system was once like.

Apart from the Mhlanga riverine- and lagoon- there are two interesting dune-forests, one of these being the Hawaan Forest bordering the south bank of the river (E. Moll, 1968, considered the main section as being in its original climax state). The name "Hawaan" is derived from a Tamil word meaning light breezes. Tamils were brought over from India in 1860 to work the then new sugar cane plantations.



Base of main stem of *Grewia caffra*

Photo: Bill Duthie

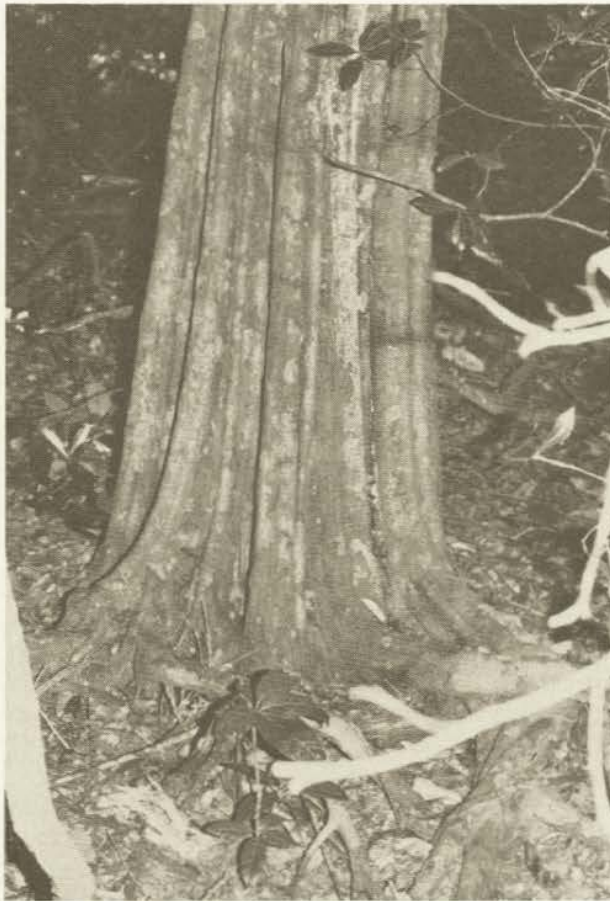
The Hawaan Forest has a number of ecological features which give it particular interest and importance, one of these being certain trees. The principal dominants are *Cola natalensis* (478) and *Cuvacoa aurea* (332) (40 per random acre = 0,404 ha). The latter tree is of the *Euphorbiaceae* family. A rare tree it is, characterised by its highly "fluted" or "folded" stems and yellow flowers.

The forest also accommodates about twenty-four species of liane (climbers) which provide not only a dense canopy to protect the forest floor micro-organisms, but also play a very important role in protecting this coastal environment characterised by its high salt-laden winds.

Another feature of the Hawaan is that many of the canopy trees, which often reach a height of 19 m (60 ft), are not upright. This is brought about by these high north-east prevailing winds (rain-bearing being westerly) which constantly blow the tall trees about, thus loosening the root formation which has poor anchorage in the sandy dune soil. The only canopy trees which seem to stay erect are *Celtis africana* (39), *Mimusops obovata* (584) and *Ziziphus mucronata* (447). This is attributed to their deep, buttress-type root systems.

Canopy trees:	Dominant lianes (climbers):
<i>Celtis africana</i>	<i>Grewia caffra</i>
<i>Mimusops obovata</i>	<i>Grewia occidentalis</i>
<i>Strychnos</i>	
<i>madagascariensis</i>	<i>Rhoicissus rhomboidea</i>
<i>Ziziphus mucronata</i>	<i>Rhoicissus tomentosa</i>
<i>Chaetachme aristata</i>	<i>Dalbergia armata</i>
<i>Diospyros natalensis</i>	

The Hawaan also supports a surprising variety of wild life. Bush buck, red duiker, blue duiker and banded mongoose make up the mammal population while hornbill, purple-crested loeries, crested guinea-fowl (their most southern location) are also found. Rock python (protected in Natal) also have a large population in the Hawaan.



The fluted base of the trunk of *Cavacoa aurea*.

Photo: Bill Duthie

ABANDONED FARM LAND

There is a "regenerating" section on the western boundary of this climax forest. The forest trees were cleared early in 1940 to make way for cane planting. Fortunately this soil proved unsuitable and the area has been left to return, it is hoped, to its original state.

By the seeding of trees and plant life by vervet monkeys and birds, this area also forms a very important "buffer" area for the forest by protecting it from strong south westerly winds and seasonal sugar-cane fires.

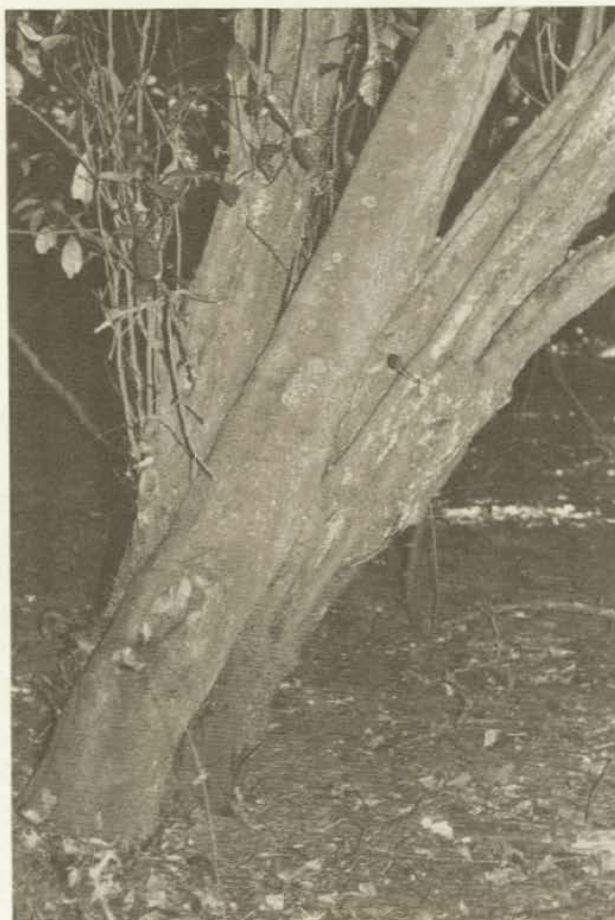
A LIST OF SOME OF THE INDIGENOUS TREES OCCURRING IN THE HAWAAN CLIMAX FOREST AND ADJOINING UMHLANGA RIVER FLOOD PLAIN SYSTEM

Numbered according to the National List of
Trees

- 22 *Phoenix reclinata* iSundu
39 *Celtis africana* —
Camdeboo-stink-
wood (white) uMvumvu

- 42 *Trema orientalis* iFamu
43 *Chaetacme aristata* umKhovothi
49 *Ficus burtt-davyi* uLuzi
57 *Ficus natalensis* umThombi
59 *Ficus polita* umKhiwane
148 *Albizia adianthifolia*
(Flat Crown) umBhelebhele
190 *Dichrostachys cinerea* uGagane
224 *Baphia racemosa* isiFithi
235 *Dalbergia obovata* umZungula
249 *Erythroxylum-*
emarginatum uPhaphane
253 *Fagara capensis*
(Knob-thorn) umNungwane
261 *Vepris undulata* umZane
263 *Teclea gerrardii* uMozane
264 *Teclea natalensis* uMozane
277 *Commiphora harveyi* umNyala
296 *Turraea floribunda* uMadlozane
313 *Drypetes arguta* umHlwakela
316 *Drypetes natalensis* umKhushwane
318 *Antidesma venosum* umShangi
330 *Croton sylvaticus* umHloshozane
332 *Cavacoa aurea* umBhuku
338 *Suregada africana* umMemezi-
omhlope
343 *Sapium*
intergerrimum umHlalampunzi
359 *Buxus natalensis* umNgquzu
360 *Sclerocarya caffra* Marula
364 *Protorhus longifolia* umHluthi
399 *Maytenus*
heterophylla isiHlangu
399.3 *Maytenus nemorosa* iNgqwangane
415 *Cassine papillosa* isiNama
422 *Apodytes dimidiata* umDakane
425 *Allophylus*
melanocarpus
426 *Allophylus natalensis* umHlohlela
430 *Deinbollia*
oblongifolia iGololenkawu
439 *Bersama lucens* uNdiyaza
447 *Ziziphus mucronata* umPhafa
451 *Scutia myrtina* uSondela
463 *Grewia occidentalis* iKlolo
464 *Hibiscus tiliaceus* uMlolwa
472 *Dombeya tiliacea* iBunda
478 *Cola natalensis* iPhumbulu
493 *Xylothea kraussiana* isiShwashwa
496 *Scolopia mundii* uLoyiphela
510.1 *Dovyalis longispina* umNyuzuma
553.1 *Eugenia capensis* umHelahelo
564 *Cussonia spicata* umSenge
582 *Bequaertiodendron*
natalense umThongwane
583 *Mimusops caffra* umThunzi
584 *Mimusops obovata* umNolwe
597 *Euclea natalensis* iDungamuzi

607	<i>Diospyros natalensis</i>	umHlavane-omh-lope
625	<i>Strychnos henningsii</i>	uManana
626	<i>Strychnos madagasca-riensis</i>	umGulugulu
629	<i>Strychnos spinosa</i>	umHlala
639	<i>Acokanthera oppositifolia</i>	inHlungunyembe
640.2	<i>Carissa bispinosa</i>	aMatungula
652	<i>Cordia caffra</i>	iBhicongo
667	<i>Clerodendrum glabrum</i>	iFamu
689	<i>Xeromphis obovata</i>	isiNgongongo
692	<i>Gardenia thunbergia</i>	umValasangweni
700.1	<i>Kraussia floribunda</i>	isiKhubashane
702.1	<i>Vangueria cyanescens</i>	umViyo
705	<i>Lagynias lasiantha</i>	umThulwa
708	<i>Canthium ventosum</i>	umVuthwamini
709	<i>Canthium locuples</i>	
711	<i>Canthium obovatum</i>	umZilambuzi
723	<i>Psychotria capensis</i>	iZeke
724	<i>Brachylaena discolor</i>	umPhahla



Trunks of three trees. *Cola natalensis* growing between two *Cavacoa aurea*.

Photo: Bill Duthie

SOME OF THE CLIMBERS FOUND IN THE HAWAAN FOREST AT UMHLANGA

1. *Dalbergia armata* (Hluhluwe Climber)
2. *Dalbergia obovata*
3. *Secamone frutescens*
4. *Grewia occidentalis*
5. *Grewia caffra*
6. *Adenia gummifera*
7. *Capparis fascicularis*
8. *Cyphostemma hypoleucum* (Double-barrelled creeper)
9. *Urera cameroonensis*
10. *Acridocarpus natalitius*
11. *Capparis sepiaria*
12. *Rhoicissus rhomboidea*
13. *Rhoicissus tomentosa*
14. *Desmonema caffra* (*Andredera baselloides*)
15. *Scutia myrtina*
16. *Putterlickia verrucosa*
17. *Monanthes caffra*
18. *Allocassine laurifolia*
19. *Uvaria caffra*
20. *Flagellaria guineensis*
21. *Coccinia palmata*
22. *Ipomoea ficifolia*
23. *Smilax kraussiana*
24. *Asparagus falcatus*

New Members 1978 —

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