

A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE AUSTRALIAN BAOBAB

(*Adansonia gregorii* F. Muell. in Hook.)

by

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The Australian Baobab (*Adansonia gregorii*) ranges along tropical coasts from near Broome in the Kimberley Division (W.A.) to the Fitzmaurice River region, north of Victoria River estuary (N. Terr.)—a lineal distance of at least 550 miles—and it is seldom found much more than 100 miles inland. A companion species (*A. digitata*) on the other side of the Indian Ocean is widely distributed throughout tropical Africa, and there is no representation of the genus in such intervening countries as Arabia and India; but eight other species have been attributed to Madagascar. This remarkable disjunction and the extraordinarily inflated trunks of these two baobab trees—which may be almost as wide as high—render them among the most intriguing vegetable productions of the globe.

Ernestine Hill (1940) has given a graphic pen-portrait of the Australian species —“a Caliban of a tree, a grizzled, distorted old goblin with a girth of a giant, the hide of a rhinoceros, twiggy fingers clutching at empty air”—and it is considered that a bibliography may be of some interest to local readers. So very picturesque is the baobab that it is probably the most photographed tree of the Australian tropics, and almost all the published pictures of it are habit studies. In the following chronological list of 55 references, a prefixing asterisk (\*) indicates that the particular reference is accompanied by an illustration. The list is as complete as practicable; but newspaper articles have not been taken into account, and it is possible that some fictional references to the tree have been missed. Periodicals are cited in *Italic type*:

1827.

Cunningham, Allan—[Natural History Appendix to P. P. King's] Narrative of a Survey of the Intertropical and Western Coasts of Australia performed between the Years 1818 and 1822. 2:521 (App. 25). [A note under the family heading *Capparides*].

1841.

\* Grey, George—Journals of Two Expeditions of Discovery in North-West and Western Australia during the Years 1837, 38 and 39. 1: 111-113.

1842.

Heward, Robert—“Biographical Sketch of the Late Allan Cunningham” in *London J. Bot.* 4: 261. [The baobab described from Cambridge Gulf and Careening Bay, 24/9/1820].

1846.

\* Stokes, J. Lort—Discoveries in Australia; . . . Voyage of H.M.S. Beagle 1: 128 & 2: 115-117. [Sketch of tree and fruit, with brief description, in Vol. 2].

1857.

Mueller, F.—“Nova Genera et Species . . . Australiæ Intratropicis” in *Hooker's J. Bot.* 9: 14. [The original scientific description of the species].

1858.

Gregory, A. C.—“Journal of the North Australian Exploring Expedition” in *J. roy. geogr. Soc.* 28: 20, 34.

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Bentham, G.—*Flora Australiensis* 1: 223.

1868.

- \* Jackson, J. R.—“The Gouty Stem Tree (*Adansonia Gregorii*, Muell.)” in *The Student and Intellectual Observer* 1: 401-406. [A detailed description with full colour plate, reproduced from an oil painting of baobab trees near Baines River, a tributary of the Victoria River, by T. Baines—artist on A. C. Gregory’s North Australian Exploring Expedition, 1855/6].

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- Maiden, J. H.—*The Useful Native Plants of Australia*: 4, 214.

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- Mueller, F.—“Botanical Notes from North-west Australia” in *Vict. Nat., Melb.* 10<sup>7</sup>: 110 (Nov.) [Habit notes from a correspondent at Derby].

1897.

- \* Saville-Kent, W.—*The Naturalist in Australia*: 266-271. [A very detailed account, with notes on the baobab’s remarkable rejuvenescence, ten photographs and an illustration of the flowers. It is called “*Adansonia rupestris*.”]

1903.

- \* Fraser, M. A. C.—*Western Australian Year Book for 1900-01* (“Notes on the Natural History, etc.): T. facing p. 188 of the extract.

1908.

- Hochreutiner, B. P. G.—*Annu. Conserv. Jard. Bot. Genève* 11 & 12: 136. [A variant of the Australian baobab described as a distinct species, *Adansonia Stanburyana*].

1909.

- \* Searcy, Alfred—*In Australian Tropics*: 206. [Second Edition].

1916.

- \* Cheel, E.—“Results of Dr. E. Mjöberg’s Swedish Scientific Expeditions to Australia 1910-13. X Plants” in *K. svenska Vetensk Akad. Handl.* 52<sup>10</sup>: T.2, fig. 193.

1917.

- Ewart, A. J. & Davies, Olive B.—*Flora of the Northern Territory*: 188 [Habitat note only].

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- \* Ostenfeld, C. H.—“Contributions to West Australian Botany II” in *Dansk. Bot. Arkiv.* 2<sup>8</sup>: 24. [Illustration of the fruit].  
Fitzgerald, W. V.—“The Botany of the Kimberleys” in *J. roy. Soc. W. Aust.* 3: 175 [Water storages in the baobab discussed].

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- \* Gardner, C. A.—“Botanical Notes. Kimberley Division of Western Australia” in *Bull. For. Dep. W. Aust.* 32: 66.

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- \* [W.A. Correspondent]—“Some Remarkable Trees of Western Australia” in *Aust. For. J.* 9<sup>8</sup>: 212 (Aug.).

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\* Barrett, Charles—“Australia’s Wonder Trees” in The Sun Tree Book (Sun Nature Book, No. 8): 30.
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[Six excellent photographs, with discussion on “Gregory’s Famous Tree”].  
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\* —*Wild Life, Melb.* 3: 405 (Oct.). [Illustration only].
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