

Alberta magna: (Natal Flame Bush; Breekhout; iButha-elikhulu; iGibampondo; uMcumane; uMabophe; iSigalaba)

Description: Medium sized tree up to 13 metres in height, found in forest margins, on rocky outcrops, usually near streams, with scattered distribution up to 1300 metre altitude in Natal and Pondoland (Eastern Cape). **Main stem:** Twisted, with narrow crown. **Bark:** Grey, smooth-ish, rough with age. **Leaves:** Opposite, simple, elliptic (70-130 x 30-50 mm), shiny, light to dark green above, paler beneath with raised yellow midrib and side veins, rolled under, tapering to rounded tip, base narrowly tapering. **Stalk:** Short (2-4 mm), thick. **Flowers:** Small, greenish white, in clusters up to 35 mm diameter (October-December), scented. **Fruit:** Yellow, roundish (up to 20 mm diameter), shiny, smooth stalk up to 30 mm long (March-July). **General:** Fruit edible.

Photographs: Dr Piet van Wyk



TREES OF THE YEAR 2002

Pittosporum viridiflorum
Alberta magna



DEPARTMENT: WATER AFFAIRS AND FORESTRY

Pittosporum viridiflorum:
(Cheesewood; Kasuur;
uMfusamvu; uMkhwenkwe)

Description: Small to medium tree, some times up to 10 m high, deciduous at higher altitudes (up to 1500 m), evergreen at the coast, widespread in forest, on rock outcrops, on forest margins and in bush clumps. **Distribution:** From Knysna through the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Lesotho, Free State into the tropical Africa. **Main stem:** Smooth pale, grey when young. Mature bark rough with darker, streaky horizontal markings. It has a bitter taste and smells like liquorice. **Leave:** alternate, scattered or clustered at ends of branchlets, variable in size and shape (30-100 x 20-40 mm), shiny dark green with conspicuous veining beneath. Short stalk. Resinous smell when crushed. **Flowers:** Small, creamy yellow, in dense terminal clusters, sweetly scented (September-November). **Fruit:** In profusion, yellowish, brown when ripe (6-10 mm), splitting to expose shiny, sticky, brilliant red seeds (November-April). **General:** Seeds very attractive to birds. Bark widely used for medicinal purposes. Lovely garden tree. Easily grown from seed.

Photographs: National Botanical Institute

