

## A Preliminary census and age of *Adensonia digitata* L. the Baobab tree from Maharashtra State, India.

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**Abstract:** *Adensonia digitata* L. (Bombaceae) the Baobab tree or Monkey bread tree as it is known, is an African plant which came to India probably 3000 to 4000 years ago, the plant is known to survive for a long period and its probable age can be determined by girth (circumference) of its stem. The present work is about some speculations of age of some such plants along with a preliminary census of this rare plant from Maharashtra State. This plant needs immediate conservation.

**Key Words:** *Adensonia digitata* L., census of plants in Maharashtra and age of plants.

### INTRODUCTION:

*Adensonia digitata* L. (Bombaceae) is a native tree widely distributed in sub-Saharan African countries and Madagascar. It also occurs in India as a migrant came here probably some 3000 to 4000 year back (Jain *et.al.* 2015). This plant is a huge tree which can grow upto 25 meters or more and can have a girth (circumference) of 80 feet or 27 to 28 meters. It lives for a very long time and probable age of the plant can be approximately predicted by measuring the girth of the stem and accurate age can be determined by carbon dating technique (Wickens, 1982). It's known to be a highly medicinal plant in African countries and Asia (Singh *et.al.* 2013). The present work gives an approximate preliminary survey of the number of plants present in Maharashtra State, along with girth of stem of some plants, so that the age of these plants can be speculated.

### MATERIAL AND METHODS:

*Adensonia digitata* L. is a rare plant in Maharashtra as well as in India. The plant can be very easily identified by huge appearance, showy flowers and typical fruits. The survey and observations of this plant was done by visiting various places in Maharashtra. Similarly reference to literature and electronic media, was considered. The girth of the stem of some plants was measured in meters/feet's and approximately the age of this plant was predicted by its girth. The results of all these observations are presented in Table No. 1 and 2.

### RESULTS:

The Table No. 1 shows the number of *Adensonia digitata* L. (Baobab) trees from different districts of Maharashtra state. The highest numbers of trees were found in district Mumbai i.e. 17 plants (Lattoo 2007), The number of plants in Nagpur is 2 (Ugemuge; 1986), in Kolapur is 3 (Sardesai and Yadav; 2004), in Aurangabad district is having about 6 plants and 2 plants are in Parbhani district (Ramjan and Mangesh; 2015).

The measurement of girth of stem of some plants along with probable age is depicted in Table No. 2. There is a direct correlation between the girth of the stem and the age of the plant. The plant having a girth of 80 feet or 25 meters is approximately 3000 years old. The measurements of some plants of Parbhani district and Aurangabad shows that these plants must be at least 1000 years old however, it can be confirmed by carbon dating technique.

**Table No. 1. List of live *Adensonia digitata* L. Plants in various districts in Maharashtra state.**

Sr. No.	Name of District	Number of plants reported
1	Mumbai	17
2	Nagpur	02
3	Kolhapur	03
4	Aurangabad	03
5	Parbhani	02
6	Thane	02
	<b>Total Plants</b>	<b>29</b>

**Table No. 2. Probable age of *Adensonia digitata* L. Plants in various districts in Maharashtra state.**

Sr. No.	Place	Girth in meters	Approximate age
1	Parbhani district (Near railway station)	10.2 m	1000 years
2	Parbhani district (Near railway station)	02 m	200 years
3	Aurangabad district (Near Auditorium hall, Dr.B.A.M.University)	4 m	400 years
4	Nagpur (Near Maharajabag)	8 m	800 years

**DISCUSSION:**

The present work indicates that so far counted number of plants of *Adensonia digitata* L. from Maharashtra state is 29, but this estimate is not absolute, as the survey is incomplete. However a very rare plant and it needs conservation, it's not only rare probably this is an oldest plant living oldest object in Maharashtra and in India.

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