WN *Network*

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Environment. Trees: the baobab
The Tree of Life

Fabio Gomes writes: The baobab tree is also known as the Upside-Down Tree. A more evocative name is the Tree of Life, because it provides shelter, food, water, and fibres for clothing and building. It grows up to 30 metres high, can live for over 1,000 years, and its trunk can store up to 100,000 litres of water. Mature trees are usually hollow, with space enough to be lived in by humans or animals. There are eight species, six in Madagascar (see picture), one in mainland Africa, and one in Australia. The fruit, which as you can see is bigger than a coconut, when broken open contains a powdery nourishing substance, which is made into porridges or mixed into meals. The potential world market for baobab fruit is estimated at $US 1 billion a year.



Editor's note
'Network' is edited by Fabio Gomes. Its purpose is to remind us of the contribution of the arts, including photography, to our understanding of food, nutrition, health and well-being. It presents the art without any extensive comment – though we welcome follow-up letters for publication in *Feedback*. Please send contributions to wn.network@gmail.com