

Racemosa Wild Coffee

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Racemosa Coffee is an extremely rare species of coffee, that grows in indigenous wild coastal dune forests, river banks, and rocky outcrops, north of Lake St Lucia (World Heritage Site) and up the eastern coast of Africa into Mozambique. Being so rare, it is a protected tree in South Africa.

It is a shrub or a rather spindly tree that can go up to 5 meters high. It has a grey-brown bark and dark green leaves, pinky-white flowers and the spherical fruit becomes purplish when mature, which occurs from October to January.

The bean is less than a third of the size of an Arabica Bean, and the yield is not as high a commercially grown Arabica Tree. Six Racemosa trees will produce the same weight in beans, as one Arabica tree. Therefore coffee farmers are reluctant to grow it. However it is extremely hardy and resistant to diseases, which makes it an ideal variety for planting in that region.

There is one known tiny plantation outside Hluhluwe in Zululand, which is possibly the only plantation in South Africa, if not the world, however there may be some cultivation and export from Mozambique, but not in great quantities.

Many areas where the trees grow are inaccessible areas, or only by foot, due to remoteness, and are therefore not viable commercially in these areas. This remoteness prevents the trees from being destroyed by over picking.

It is one of the few naturally occurring low in caffeine coffees in the world (0.38% which qualifies it as caffeine free). Therefore it does not have to go through an Industrial decaffeinating process, and is ideal for caffeine intolerant coffee drinkers. The flavour of the Racemosa Coffee Bean is described as minty, dry, woody or forest-like, a hint of liquorice, slightly smoky and natural bitter flavour, yet refreshingly light.

The traditional products, local breeds, and know-how collected by the Ark of Taste belong to the communities that have preserved them over time. They have been shared and described here thanks to the efforts of the network that Slow Food has developed around the world, with the objective of preserving them and raising awareness. The text from these descriptions may be used, without modifications and citing the source, for non-commercial purposes in line with the Slow Food philosophy.



Students of the Gastronomic Sciences at Pollenzo are collaborating with Slow Food to fill the Ark.



Territory

State: South Africa

Region: KwaZulu-Natal

Other info

Categories: Coffee

Nominated by: Melissa de Billot

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Don't eat if you want to save it!

This vegetable or animal breed is rare and at severe risk of extinction. We have to avoid harvesting, hunting or fishing it for a sufficient period of time, in the hope that the surviving specimens have time to recover. Otherwise, future generations will be denied the chance to appreciate it.

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