

Exotic *Acacia* Species in Zimbabwe: A Historical and Ecological Perspective

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KEYWORDS Alien Flora. *Acacia* Species. Biogeography. Herbarium Specimens. Zimbabwe

ABSTRACT The present study investigated the history, occurrence, geographical distribution and invasiveness of the exotic *Acacia* species in Zimbabwe using herbarium and literature records. At least 17 *Acacia* species originating from Australia were introduced to Zimbabwe, with nine species (52.9% of total) documented as casuals, naturalized or invasive. *Acacia mearnsii* and *A. melanoxylon* were recognized as invasive, *A. dealbata*, *A. decurrens*, *A. elata* and *A. podalyriifolia* as naturalized, and *A. baileyana*, *A. longifolia* and *A. salicina* as casuals. All nine exotic *Acacia* species were introduced as ornamentals, *A. dealbata*, *A. decurrens* and *A. mearnsii* were also introduced for tanbark, and *A. longifolia*, *A. mearnsii* and *A. melanoxylon* were also introduced for timber. The majority (88.9%) of exotic *Acacia* species were introduced in the eastern part of Zimbabwe, a region characterized by tropical to semi-temperate climate, which is similar to the areas of origin of *Acacia* species.