

# **MATAMBA – WILD FRUIT OF AFRICA**

## **OVERVIEW OF THE OBJECTS**

**Repository:** Crandall Public Library.  
Folklife Center  
Glens Falls, NY.

**Creator:** Unknown craftsman in Zimbabwe

**Title:** Matamba – Wild Fruit of Africa

**Dates:** 1990s

**Quantity:** 7 items

**Identification:** Folk Art

## **INDEX TERMS**

**Topics:** United Methodism  
African crafts

**Places:** Zimbabwe

**Important People:** Erica Sigauke  
Erica Gonyea

**Form/Genre:** realia

## **ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

**Preferred Citation:** Matamba – Wild Fruit of Africa  
Folklife Center  
Crandall Public Library, Glens Falls, NY.

**Accession Information:** Donated to the Folklife Center by Erica Gonyea, April 2019.

**Processing Information:** Arranged and described by Erica Gonyea, April 2019

## **DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE OBJECTS**

7 small objects made from the husks of Matamba fruit.

The matamba, or monkey orange tree, *Strychnos spinosa* is indigenous to tropical and subtropical Africa. It produces, sweet-sour, yellow fruits, containing numerous hard brown seeds. Greenish-white flowers grow in dense heads at the ends of branches (Sep-Feb/Spring - summer). The smooth, hard fruit are large and green, ripen to yellow color. Both animals and people eat the fruit, and the wood is used for carving and timber while the bark, root or unripe fruit are used against snake bite due to the presence of strychnine. Crushed leaves can heal sores, while a strong tea made from the roots can help relieve cold symptoms. Fresh leaves are pounded into a paste to treat sores and drained liquid from the crushed leaves can be sprayed as a natural insecticide against aphids and scale insects.

The hard rind of the fruit can be dried and carved. The natural brown color of the dried rind can be incised to reveal a tan layer underneath.

This collection includes:

one small bowl, inscribed on the bottom "Matamba – Wild Fruit of Africa," 3.25 inches across x 1 inch deep;

four place-card holders incised with animal silhouettes, 2.5 inches across, and ca. 1 inch tall;

two pieces with a 7/8ths inch hole in the top, which might serve as candle holders.

One is about 3.25 inches across and 2.5 inches tall, incised with elephants; and the other is 2.75 inches across and .75 inches tall.

These were a gift from Erica Sigauke, who came from Zimbabwe, to Erica Gonyea, who comes from America. They met at a meeting of the Troy Conference of the United Methodist Church and formed a friendship on the basis of their shared name.