

48508. AMYGDALUS PERSICA L. Amygdalaceæ. **Peach.**
(*Prunus persica* Stokes.)

From Santa Cruz, Calif. Presented by Mr. George G. Streator. Received November 19, 1919.

"*Indian Blood* peach. A vigorous-growing tree, bearing freestone peaches. The flesh is dark blood red, very juicy, and of very good quality; the skin is greenish gray suffused with red. It is late maturing and looks as though it would make an excellent canning peach." (*Peter Bisset.*)

48509. VOUCAPOUA INERMIS (Swartz) Knuth. Fabaceæ.
(*Andira inermis* H. B. K.)

From Georgetown, Demerara, British Guiana. Presented by Mr. R. Ward, superintendent, Botanic Garden. Received November 25, 1919.

A slow-growing leguminous tree, called in Jamaica *cabbage tree* or *cabbage-bark tree*, on account of its disagreeable odor. It is generally distributed in Porto Rico and is sometimes used in coffee plantations for shade. The fleshy pods, about the size of a horse-chestnut, contain but a single seed. The floors of the caves of Aguas Buenas, Porto Rico, are in places covered with the seeds of this species, which are carried in by bats for the sake of the inclosing pulp. These seeds germinate in the caves, sending up slender white sprouts 2 or 3 feet high. The wood, which is said to be hard and durable, varies in the same tree from reddish yellow to black and takes a high polish. It is used for wheel hubs, for flooring and all sorts of carpenter work, and was formerly used in Brazil in the construction of boats. In Porto Rico its most common use is for the framework of houses. It is imported into Europe and used for turned parts of cabinetwork, and to make canes and parasol handles. (Adapted from *Cook and Collins, Mexican, Central American, and Porto Rican Plants*, p. 80.)

48510. PORTULACARIA AFRA Jacq. Portulacaceæ. **Spekboom.**

From Johannesburg, Transvaal. Cuttings collected by Dr. H. L. Shantz, Agricultural Explorer of the Bureau of Plant Industry. Received November 26, 1919.

"(No. 122. Pretoria, Transvaal. October 8, 1919.) Plant from the Botanic Grounds." (*Shantz.*)

A succulent South African shrub, rising to 12 feet, which affords locally the principal food for elephants; it is excellent for sheep pasture; hence, it may deserve naturalization on stony ridges and in sandy desert land not otherwise readily utilized. It is stated that all kinds of pasture animals eat it readily and, when grass is scarce, live on it almost entirely. It grows on hot rocky slopes and prefers doleritic soil. It is easily grown from cuttings and even from single leaves. *Spekboom* displays an extraordinary recuperative power when broken by browsing animals or when injured from other causes. The trunk may attain 1 foot in diameter. (Adapted from *Mueller, Select Extra-Tropical Plants*, p. 420.)

In some places the spekboom is arborescent, up to 20 feet high, often forming dense thickets. The juicy leaves are a wholesome food for all classes of stock as well as for wild animals, including buffaloes and elephants; hence, farms with plenty of spekboom need not fear an ordinary drought. "Providence meant to spoil our farmers in placing the spekboom on the hills of the karoo," wrote MacOwan in one of his articles on the fodder plants of the country. (Adapted from *Marloth, The Flora of South Africa*, vol. 1, p. 209.)