

Akie Community

Kiteto,
Tanzania



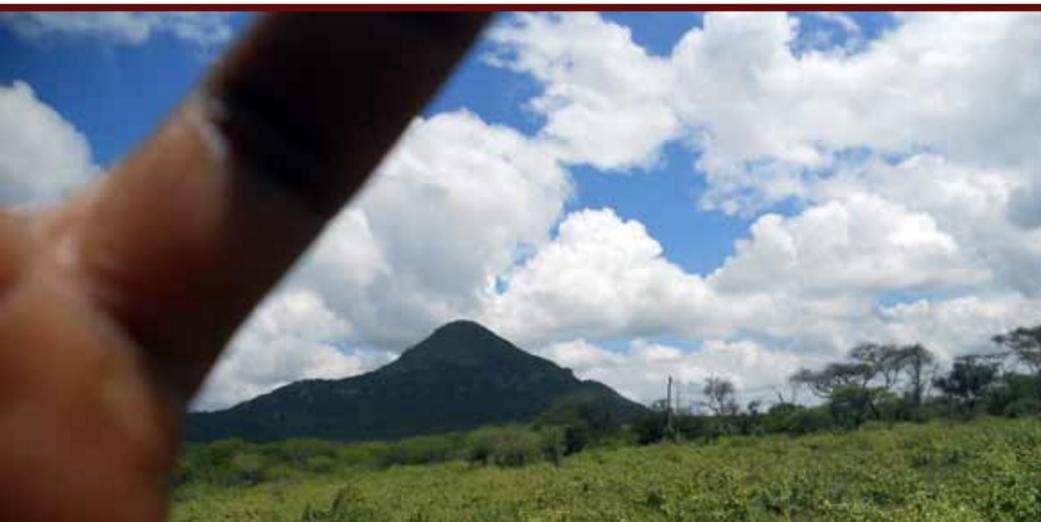
This tree has different meanings to us. **We use the fruit for food and it keeps the bees.** We grind the fruit and then you put the fruit flour in water and you can eat it like porridge. **We** eat the honey and we also use the wax for cleaning the baobab holes to attract other bees to come and stay. The holes on the trunk are made when we build ladders. **We make ladders out of sticks** that we hammer into the trunk. When you find a baobab with lots of holes in it then you know that it keeps many bees – it is a good tree. This baobab has fed many children! Because many people have made ladders to climb up to collect honey. Everybody who comes here makes a new one, we don't trust anyone else's ladder. The old ones might not be strong or safe anymore.

To us the pastoralists are friendlier compared to the farmers who take the land because the **pastoralists only use the pastures. They are better neighbours.** But sometimes the Maasai overuse the land and that can lead to overgrazing. This means that we lose our flowers that the bees depend on and destroys the fruit that we eat. **We depend on gatherings.** It is very unpredictable. We can go and look for honey and then we don't find any. Sometimes we might go to the pastoralists and ask them to lend us food or blood from the cattle and they will give us some. **The Maasai have to follow our land use plans** because if they fail to do so they have to move. This is our land and they know it.



The **bees depend on certain flowers to make honey.** If there are no flowers there is no honey. This picture shows a tree called 'Corneta' in our language and it is one of our most important trees for the bees. It smells very good. When you walk through the bush you notice when it flowers. It is very important in our lives; the connection between flowers, bees, honey and us Akie. If there is a prolonged drought the flowers finish very quickly and **the honey will be very little.**

We make fire by rubbing sticks together and use this to smoke out the bees from honey-bearing trees. We use a special wood stick to make the fire but sometimes we have to use hard wood when we cannot find the other one.



That hill over there is where we originally lived, where we came from. It has many meanings to us. **If there are many bad years we go there so that we can get honey and fruits.** On that hill you can find those special types of bees that don't sting and that survive dry years. You can even find wild animals there. But in normal circumstances we don't go there, it is our reserve. **We** have different coping mechanisms for when we have many bad years. **The major one is mobility,** to move to areas with less people. It becomes hard when the land is taken from us for agriculture. We say that **land grabbing must be stopped.**

We normally have the short rains in November until January. Then the heavy rains start in mid- to end of February until April. After May the rainy season stops. In bad years we get the short rains in December or mid-January until March. Then we get no more rain. **This year is in between a good and a bad year.** Twenty years ago there were many good years in rotation. But in the more recent years you see **a number of bad years coming more frequently.** Before you could have five years without seeing a bad year but now after one good year there is a bad one – the calendar has become very confusing.



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