

Tree with the largest crown (2019)

Species: *Ficus salicifolia*

Common name: The Wonderboom

Location: Wonderboom Nature Reserve - City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality

Size index: 380 (Height 22m; trunk circumference 16.75m (combined value calculated for numerous stems based on a formula); crown diameter 56m)

The Wonderboom Tree is a wild fig tree found within the Wonderboom Nature Reserve a few kilometres north of the centre of Pretoria. The gigantic tree consists of a mother tree (that eventually died) and three rings of daughter trees which sprouted from branches touching the ground. Such regeneration is not typical of this tree species. The Wonderboom Tree has the largest crown size of all trees in the country. It measures 61 m from one end to the other at the widest point, but averages 56m. It has been carbon dated to more than a thousand years old. A circular board walk surrounds the tree to protect the roots of the tree against the many visitors it receives each year. Many notable statesmen and travellers have visited the tree since the late nineteenth century. For many years it was believed by some followers of the Ndzindza Ndebele that Chief Nyabela Mahlangu of the Ndzindza Ndebele may have been buried under the tree, and that the tree gains its growing potential from the buried chief (the chief was actually buried a few kilometres from this site). The old Zuid Afrikaanse Republiek imprisoned chief Mahlangu in 1883 after a protracted war with his nation. He was released in 1903 after the Anglo-Boer War, but died soon thereafter.



Image: *Ficus salicifolia*, Wonderboom Nature Reserve - City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality