Grafting of Marula Trees

**What is grafting?**
Grafting is a technique that joins material from two trees, which will grow together as one tree.

Grafting is very useful because it can help you to grow a tree with superior qualities. For example, a marula tree that produces big, juicy fruits from which you can make the best *omaongo*, or a marula tree that produces fruits with big kernels that contain a lot of oil. It is not 100% guaranteed that a grafted marula seedling will survive, but if it does it will bear fruits after 1 or 2 years!

**Rootstock**
A marula seedling that is 2-3 years old can be used as the “rootstock”; the part that will grow to become the roots of the grafted marula tree. You can use a seedling that is growing in a well-protected area, or grow a seedling from a seed in a pot or planting bag. Make sure you use a seed from a fully grown, healthy tree.

After 2-3 years the seedling has developed some wood, and is ready for grafting.

**SCION**
A scion (outayi) is the end of a branch. It will grow to become the stem and the branches of the grafted tree. The properties of the fruit of the grafted tree will be the same as the fruits from the tree where the scion was cut from (mother tree). That is why it is very important to cut the scion from a mother tree that is healthy, bears many fruits, and grows the type of fruits that you want to have.

The scion should be as thick as the rootstock, be 15-20 cm long, and have healthy buds.

Cut the scion in the winter when the tree is dormant, and use it for grafting the same day.

**Grafting**
Grafting is the process of putting the rootstock and the scion together, so that they can grow together as one tree:

- Cut rootstock
- Cut scion
- Connect scion and rootstock
- Tie graft with tape
- Seal graft with gel

After 1 year the rootstock and scion should have grown together, and the grafted seedling can be planted. Remove the gel and tape from the “wound” after planting the grafted seedling. Continue removing any growth from the rootstock.

For more information and assistance on marula grafting, contact your nearest Forestry Office!