

Mopani tree under threat

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MASHAVA – Persistent and long electricity load shedding here has seen desperate residents poaching firewood and putting the Mopani tree in danger of extinction.

“We are experiencing acute power shortages here so we do not have any option but to cut down the trees so that we use the firewood for cooking and other domestic chores,” said a resident from the area.

“We know that destroying the environment is an offence. We also understand that a Mopani tree is a very important tree, but we do not have any alternative.”

The Mopani trees are also being cut up and sold as firewood.

“The Mopani tree is in high demand and we are in good business with some buyers who come from as far as Masvingo city and Gutu. If they cannot solve the issue of electricity with urgency the whole forests will become deserts,” said a firewood vendor who said he earns an average of US\$10 per day.

An official from Environmental Management Agency (EMA) in Mashava said: “Cutting down of trees is a very serious offence and anyone caught cutting down trees will be prosecuted. We are soon going to carry out an investigation over the matter.”