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PLANTS PEOPLE
POSSIBILITIES



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SEPASAL is a database and enquiry service about useful "wild" and semi-domesticated plants of tropical and subtropical drylands, developed and maintained at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. "Useful" includes plants which humans eat, use as medicine, feed to animals, make things from, use as fuel, and many other uses.

Since 2004, there has been a Namibian SEPASAL team, based at the National Botanical Research Institute of the Ministry of Agriculture which has been updating the information on Namibian species from Namibian and southern African literature and unpublished sources. By August 2007, over 700 Namibian species had been updated.

Work on updating species information, and adding new species to the database, is ongoing. It may be worth visiting the web site and querying the database to obtain the latest information for this species.

Internet SEPASAL

New query

Edit query

View query results

 *Display help*In names list include: synonyms vernacular names and display: 10 names per page*Your query found 1 taxon***Hoodia currorii (Hook.) Decne. [5104]**

Family: ASCLEPIADACEAE

Synonyms

Hoodia lugardii N.E. Br. in Fl. Trop. Africa 4
 Hoodia macrantha Dinter
 Hoodia montana Nel in White & Sloane
 Hoodia currorii var. minor R.A. Dyer
 Hoodia gibbosa Nel in White & Sloane
 Adenium 'namaquarium' Henslow
 Scytanthus burkeii Hooker

Vernacular names

Afrikaans (Southern Africa) bobbejaansghaap [6533], ghaap [2795]
 Damara (Namibia) !khowa.b/s [5095]
 Khoi (southern Africa) khobab [2795]
 Nama (Namibia) ! khobab [2795], !khowab [2136]
 Otjiherero (Namibia) otjinkandue [5095]
 SeTswana (Botswana) seboka [6533], sekopane [6533]

Partial distribution

Plant origin	Continent	Region	Botanical country
Native	Africa	South Tropical Africa	Angola [6344] [6531], Zimbabwe [5419] [6344] [6531]
		Southern Africa	Botswana [5104] [5700] [6344] [6531], Namibia [5104] [5149] [5183] [6344] [6531], Transvaal [5104] [6344] [6531]

ISO countries: South Africa [5104] [6344] [6531]

Descriptors

Category	Descriptors and states
DESCRIPTION	Herb [5104]; Prostrate/Procumbent/Semi-erect [6531]; Erect [6531]; Perennial [5104] [5123]; Succulent - stems [5104] [5123] [6531]; Thorny/Spiny - stems [5123] [6531]; Plant Height

	0.15-1 m [6531]
CLIMATE	Subtropical, Hot and Arid [5104]; Dry with No Marked Seasonality [6344]
SOILS	Limestone Parent Material [5123] [6531]; Well Drained [5123]; Boulders/Rocky [5445]; Gravels/Stony [5123]; Sandy [5123]; Dry [5123]
HABITAT	Lowland [6531]; Valleys [6531]; Shrubland/Bushland/Scrub [6344] [6531]; Grassland/Forb-Land [5123] [6344]; Ridges [5123]; Hillsides/Slopes [5098] [5445]; Outcrops/Kopjes/Inselbergs [5123]; Crevices/Fissures/Fractures [2136]; Permanent Watercourses [6531]; Altitude 50-1400 m a.s.l. [5104]
PRODUCTION AND VALUE	Wild Plants Utilised [2136] [2795]
FURTHER DATA SOURCES	Botanical Illustration [5445] [6344] [6531]; Additional References [6532] [6534]; Botanical Photograph [6344]; Databases [5123]; Grid Map [5123] [6344] [6531]
SEPASAL DATASHEET STATUS	Taxon Recently Added from Literature [6040]

Uses

Major use	Use group	Specific uses
FOOD [2795]	Unspecified Parts	
	Stems	non-alcoholic beverages [2136]; raw [2136] [5084] [6533]
	Inflorescences	flowers, raw [5084]
SOCIAL USES	'Religious' Uses	stems, ritual/religion/magic [5084]
MEDICINES	Circulatory System Disorders	stems, humans, blood pressure, hypertension, oral ingestion [2136] [2795]
	Digestive System Disorders	stems, humans, indigestion, oral ingestion [2136] [2795]
	Endocrine System Disorders	stems, humans, diabetes mellitus, oral ingestion [2795] [5098]
	Infections/Infestations	stems, humans, respiratory system, colds, oral ingestion [2136]
	Nutritional Disorders	stems, humans, appetite suppressant [2795]
	Pain	stems, humans, stomach, anodyne, oral ingestion [2136] [2795]; stems, humans, eyes, anodyne, external applications [2136]

Picture

None recorded

Notes

NOMENCLATURE/TAXONOMY

Name derivation:

The Hoodia genus was named after Van Hood, a keen succulent grower. The species is named after Dr. A.B. Curror who collected plants in Angola in the 1840's and probably discovered this plant [[5445](#)].

DISTRIBUTION

Botswana:

Subsp. lugardii [[5093](#)].

Southern Africa:

Subsp. currorii occurs in Namibia only. Subsp. lugardii occurs in Botswana and the Limpopo province of South

Africa [5104] .

Zimbabwe:

Subsp. lugardii [5419] .

Angola:

Appears to be restricted to the very arid parts of the coastal Namib Desert [6531] .

Angola:

Subsp. currorii [6198] .

Namibia:

Subsp. currorii and lugardii [6198] .

Namibia:

Occurs in the arid zone (coastal Namib Desert) but advances eastward as well. It occurs furthest east in the dry, short, mopane 'forest' of the Ugab River Valley south-west of Outjo (Vingerklip area) more than 250 km from the coast and also in dry Acacia scrub in the Erongo Mountains and south-east of these beyond Karibib (about 200 km from the coast) [6531] .

Namibia:

Kaokoland, Omaruru, Swakopmund and Karibib districts [5183] .

Southern Africa:

Subsp. lugardii is found further east (east of 24 degrees E) than any other hoodia and occurs in the low-lying, calcareous region along the Botletle River south of the Mgadi-gadi salt pan of central Botswana. Also along the low-lying and rather calcareous region along the valley of the Limpopo River in the far northern Transvaal north of the Soutpansberg. It also occurs along the Limpopo River in southern Zimbabwe [6531] .

RARITY/CONSERVATION

Namibia:

Protected [5149] .

Namibia:

Assessed in 1994 as lower risk, least concern [5400] .

Namibia:

Subsp. currorii assessed in 1994 as lower risk least concern [5400] .

DESCRIPTION

Height:

0.3-1 m [5104] .

Flowers:

Subsp. currorii; arising in groups of 1-4, opening successively, near apex of stem. Corolla (50-) 60-170 (-180) mm diameter, more or less circular to clearly 5-lobed, outside pale flesh-coloured usually with narrow red-pink patch at base of tube among sepals, inside deep reddish to flesh-pink or yellowish-pink usually with darker veins, with orange-livid shiny area around mouth and inside tube, outside glabrous and smooth, covered with pink to purple hair [6531] .

Habit:

A spiny succulent consisting of many erect to spreading stems, forming shrub, branching from base [6531] .

Height:

Subsp. currorii 0.15-1 m tall and 0.15-1 m or more in diameter. Subsp. lugardii 0.3-1 m tall, 0.3-1 m or more in diameter [6531] .

Stems:

40-60 (-80) mm thick with prominent, obtuse, laterally flattened tubercles vertically arranged into 11-16 (-24) angles, each tubercle tipped with a sharp spine 6-10 mm long, grey- to brown-green [6531] .

FOOD - STEMS

Non-alcoholic beverages:

In Namibia pieces of the stem are added to sugar water to give a refreshing drink. Because of its bitterness, it is at the same time thirst quenching [2136] .

Raw:

In Namibia the Topnaar and Nama people eat the stems raw after they have removed the outer skin and thorns. It

tastes best after the rainy season when the plants flower [2136] .

Raw:

The spines are scraped off with a stone and the stem is eaten like a cucumber. They are bitter and mucilaginous. They contain more water after rain or when taken home and soaked. The stems leave a curious licorice-like aftertaste and impart a pleasant taste to tobacco smoke [6533] .

FOOD - INFLORESCENCES

Flowers, raw:

The flowers are sometimes eaten by the Nama children in Namibia [5084] .

SOCIAL USES - 'RELIGIOUS' USES

Stems, ritual/religion/magic:

In Botswana it is used for purification after death. Branch tips are cut off and placed around cattle corrals, along cattle trails or even around people to prevent further death. In another area it is used together with "msemama" and "moralala" for such purification. All three plants are pounded together in a mortar with water and used for washing. The same water is then sprinkled on cattle to prevent their death and straying. It also increases the herd and makes them healthy, even in a drought. Another use is a ritual to find the cause of death. The Hoodia thorns are removed, the stem sliced and dried, and pounded. This is then mixed with soil from the filled grave. A fly-whisk is then used to sprinkle this on the grave while chanting, "I'm not a man, I'm a boy. I want to know what (who) ate (killed) my child, wife, etc". This goes with the belief that death is caused by bewitching [6533] .

Stems, ritual/religion/magic:

In the Tses area in Namibia, pregnant women like to eat the stems, for it is believed that it will prevent the newly-born baby from having a dry mouth. Such a condition is regarded as an indication that the child is ill (Budack 1965) [5084] .

Stems, ritual/religion/magic:

It is used to remove bad luck from the body. The Hoodia, bulbs of 'mogopa', 'madiaphalana' (*Jatropha erythropoda*) vines, 'moitsaodi', bulbs of 'mogaga' and 'sekaname' (*Urginea sanguinea*) are mixed fresh and pounded in a mortar with water. This is used to wash the body. Since 'sekaname' (*Urginea sanguinea*) makes the body itch, vaseline or animal fat must also be applied (Mosaake, personal communication) [6533] .

MEDICINES - CIRCULATORY SYSTEM DISORDERS

Stems, humans, blood pressure, hypertension, oral ingestion:

In Namibia the outer skin and thorns of the stems are removed before it is taken orally to lower high blood pressure [2136] .

MEDICINES - DIGESTIVE SYSTEM DISORDERS

Stems, humans, indigestion, oral ingestion:

In Namibia the outer skin and thorns of the stems are removed before it is taken orally to cure indigestion [2136] .

MEDICINES - ENDOCRINE SYSTEM DISORDERS

Stems, humans, diabetes mellitus, oral ingestion:

In Namibia the plant is known among the Damara people as a diabetes remedy. The outer layer is scraped off, together with its thorns. A piece, the length of a pencil, is cut off every day and one third eaten in the morning, noon and night [5098] .

MEDICINES - INFECTIONS/INFESTATIONS

Stems, humans, colds, oral ingestion:

In Namibia the outer skin and thorns of the stems are removed before it is taken orally to cure colds [2136] .

MEDICINES - PAIN

Stems, humans, eyes, anodyne, external applications:

The Topnaars in Namibia applied the flesh to the eyes to relieve eye pains [2136] .

Stems, humans, stomach, oral ingestion:

In Namibia the outer skin and thorns of the stems are removed before it is taken orally to relieve stomach pain [2136] .

ALTITUDE

Southern Africa:

Subsp. *currorii* at 50-1400 m. Subsp. *lugardii* at 600-1000 m [5104] .

TOPOGRAPHY/SITES

Southern Africa:

River banks, river valleys [6531] .

GEOLOGY

Namibia:

Limestone, granite and basalt [5123] .

VEGETATION

Namibia:

Acacia scrub [6531] .

Namibia:

Desert grassland [5123] .

Southern Africa:

Among small trees of *Acacia tortilis* and *Colophospermum mopane* in fairly open bushveld, usually forming a shrub around the base of a tree [6531] .

CYTOLOGY

For the genus $x = 11$ [5150] .

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Updated for southern Africa by E. Irish, checked by C. Mannheimer; SEPASAL Namibia, National Botanical Research Institute, February 2007 .

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