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**Two nabbed in Northern Cape for possession
of protected plants**

Picture: SAPS

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The Hawks in Springbok arrested a duo for being in possession of [conophytum](#) with an estimated value of R168,435.

Two suspects, aged 22 and 28, were arrested on Thursday, by a multiple disciplinary team composed of Springbok DPCI, Upington counter-narcotics, Steinkopf SAPS, and Namakwa public order policing.

Information was received by the team regarding a particular vehicle that was travelling from Port Nolloth to Springbok with [protected plants](#).

"A disruptive operation was conducted and the vehicle was spotted and stopped at the N7 road near Okiep and it was thoroughly searched," Hawks spokesperson, Warrant Officer Nomthandazo Mnisi said.

"During the search, two bags containing 11229 of [conophytum](#) with an estimated street value of R168,435 were recovered.

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"The team further confiscated three cellphones and a vehicle that was used in the commission of crime," Mnisi said.

Mnisi said that both suspects are in Springbok police cells pending their first court appearance.

She also added that the two suspects are expected to appear before Springbok Magistrate's Court on Monday, for contravention of Section 57 of the National Environmental Management-Biodiversity (Nemba) Act 10 of 2004.

[South African National Biodiversity Institute \(Sanbi\)](#) Red List of South African Plants reported that the *Conophytum pageae* is the most widespread species from the genus *Conophytum*.

It grows in southern Namibia and Namaqualand.

Sanbi maintained that *conophytum* genus is in high demand in the international horticultural trade. One known population makes this species highly vulnerable to population loss and is threatened with over-collection

Between 5,000 and 10,000 specimens have been removed from habitat since March 2019 with rates and volumes of harvesting increasing constantly.

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