

Acacia hebeclada

A shrub or small tree. **Young growth velvety.** THORNS **straight or slightly curved, especially near the tips; not hooked; hairy when young.** LEAVES **slightly to densely hairy.** FLOWERS pale yellow to creamy-white balls, near the ends of the branches. FRUIT **a characteristic thick, woody pod, with greyish hairs.**

Flowers and pods are conspicuous. In fruit, this species cannot be confused with any other. Without pods, it may be confused with *A. reficiens* or *A. luederitzii*. There are three subspecies, which are easily distinguished by their pods, but sometimes difficult to tell apart without pods. Thus, some of the records from the north may have been incorrectly assigned to subspecies. The subspecies are sufficiently different with sufficient numbers of observations for each to be treated separately. Records from the north were not assigned to subspecies have been omitted.

DISTRIBUTION

The species is widespread throughout most of Namibia. South of 19° S only subsp. *hebeclada* occurs. In the north-west, *A. hebeclada* is almost entirely represented by subsp. *tristis*. In the central-north, mainly subsp. *tristis* with some subsp. *hebeclada* is found. In Kavango, subsp. *tristis* and subsp. *hebeclada* occur, with subsp. *chobiensis* along the Okavango River. In Caprivi, mainly subsp. *hebeclada* with subsp. *chobiensis* on the floodplains.

A. hebeclada subsp. *hebeclada*

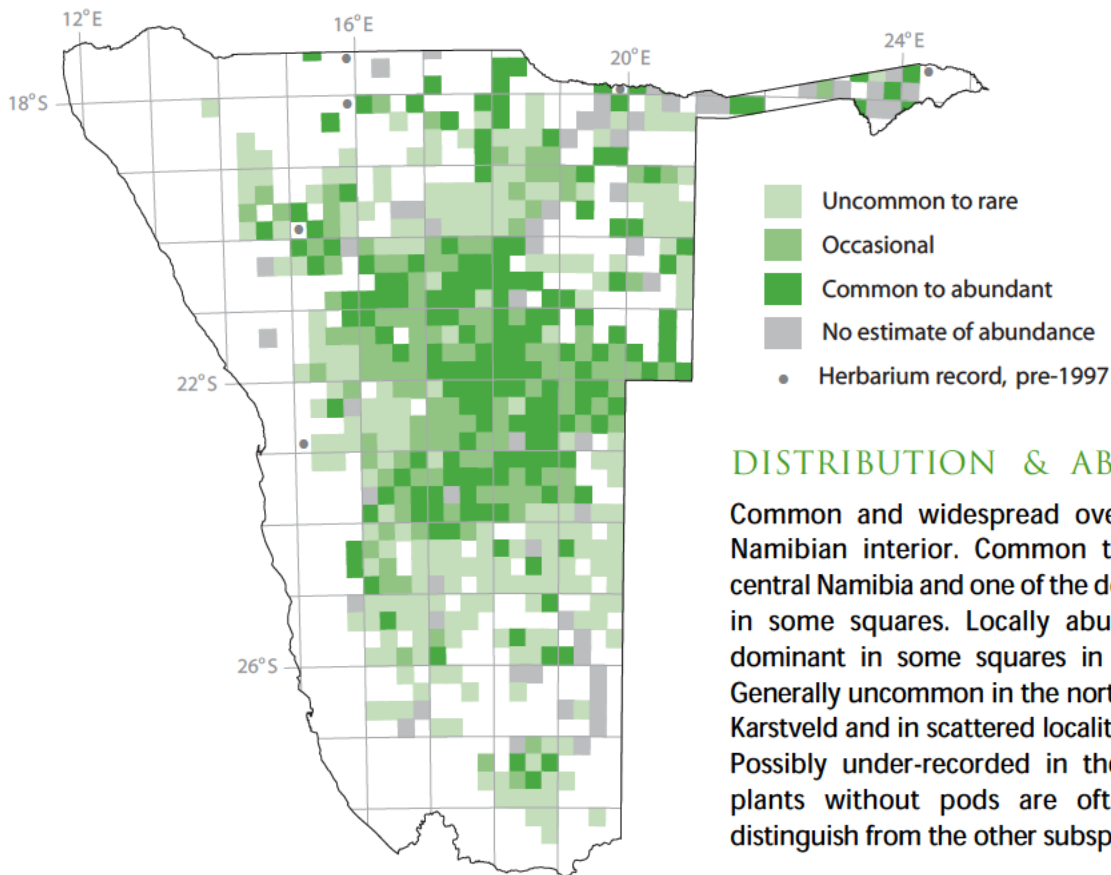
Candle-pod Acacia

Trassiebos (A); Kerzenakazie,
Stehschotenakazie (G); otjimbuku (H);
!geós (K)

[2,049 records from 580 (54%) squares]

Generally a spreading shrub with branches arising near the ground and curving upwards; sometimes a single-stemmed tree. FRUIT **an erect pod**, less than 25 mm wide.



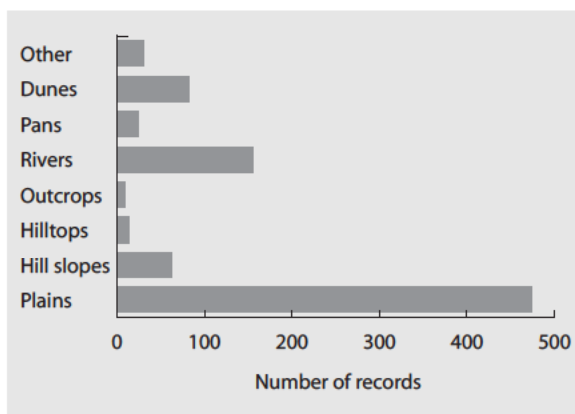


DISTRIBUTION & ABUNDANCE

Common and widespread over most of the Namibian interior. Common to abundant in central Namibia and one of the dominant species in some squares. Locally abundant or even dominant in some squares in the north-east. Generally uncommon in the north-west, Cuvelai, Karstveld and in scattered localities in the south. Possibly under-recorded in the north, where plants without pods are often difficult to distinguish from the other subspecies.

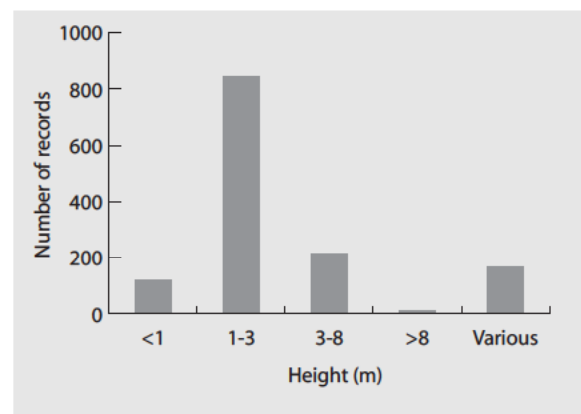
HABITAT

Predominantly found on plains, with some occurrence in dry rivers, hilly areas and on dunes; often around pans in the north-east. In the north, subsp. *hebeclada* is often found on calcrete, while in the central and southern interior it occurs on sandy substrates.



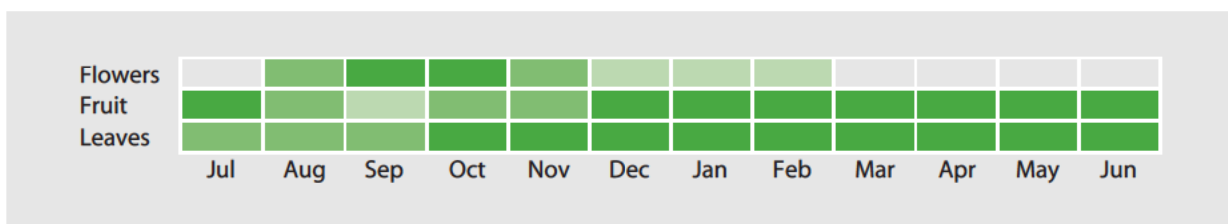
GROWTH FORM

Mostly a thicket-forming shrub up to 3 m high, occasionally a shrub or tree higher than 3 m; stands of mixed heights occur in the central highlands. Often forming low, spreading islands in the central-east and south.



ANNUAL CYCLE

FLOWERS mainly August to November, with the main peak in September, generally continuing through to February, but until May in some areas and some years. Have occasionally been recorded all year. A very small second flowering peak was recorded in the Kalahari, north-central areas and central highlands in 1998, 1999 and 2001; the central highlands had the longest flowering period with flowering continuing through March into May. FRUIT present all year, but generally by August and September they are all old pods; new pods start developing in October. LEAVES present on at least some individuals all year, but many trees are bare from June to September, when new leaves are produced.



GENERAL

May encroach in certain areas, and has a pronounced ability to coppice. In sandy areas, sand often accumulates around the plants, forming low islands. Occasionally infested with parasites (mistletoe).

Subsp. *hebeclada* is heavily browsed by domestic livestock and game, especially kudu; the pods are also eaten. Birds such as the White-browed Sparrow-weaver and Red-billed Buffalo-weaver nest in them. The gum is edible. Roots are used by the Himba for stomach ailments (TJ11); they are also used medicinally for chest pains and coughing. This species supplies the material for a number of other traditional uses (necklaces, hairdressing), including construction (fence poles, hut building and tools).

CONSERVATION CONCERNS

None recorded.

Acacia hebeclada subsp *hebeclada*, L. Hoffmann



A. hebeclada subsp. *chobiensis*

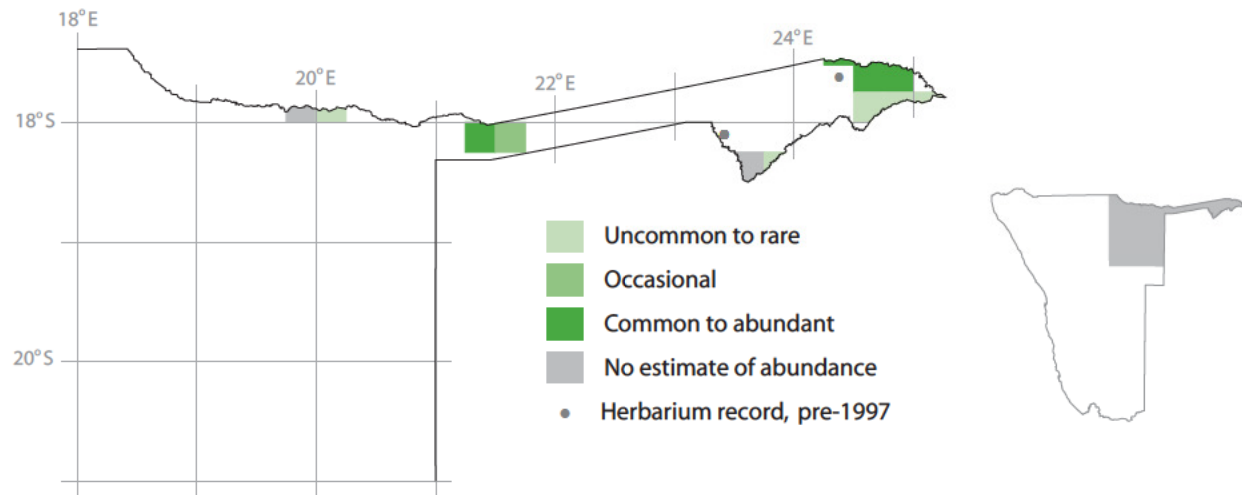
Chobe Candle-pod Acacia

Shiginda (Rum); thighondho (T)

[23 records from 12 (1%) squares]



Usually a large, spreading shrub. **FRUIT broader (>25 mm wide) and more robust pods**, distinguishes it from the other subspecies.



DISTRIBUTION & ABUNDANCE

Uncommon to common along the Okavango River and in the eastern Caprivi.

HABITAT

In sandy omurambas, and on river banks and floodplains.

GROWTH FORM

Mostly a shrub of 1–3 m high, rarely a tree of over 3 m.

ANNUAL CYCLE

Observations were only made in May, June, August, October and November. **FLOWERS** were

recorded in August. **FRUIT** recorded from May to August, with old pods in November. **LEAVES** were present during most observations, but only in 33% of those in August.

GENERAL

Pods used for livestock fodder; also eaten by people in times of food scarcity.

CONSERVATION CONCERNS

Possibly threatened by habitat destruction.

A.hebeclada subsp. *tristis*

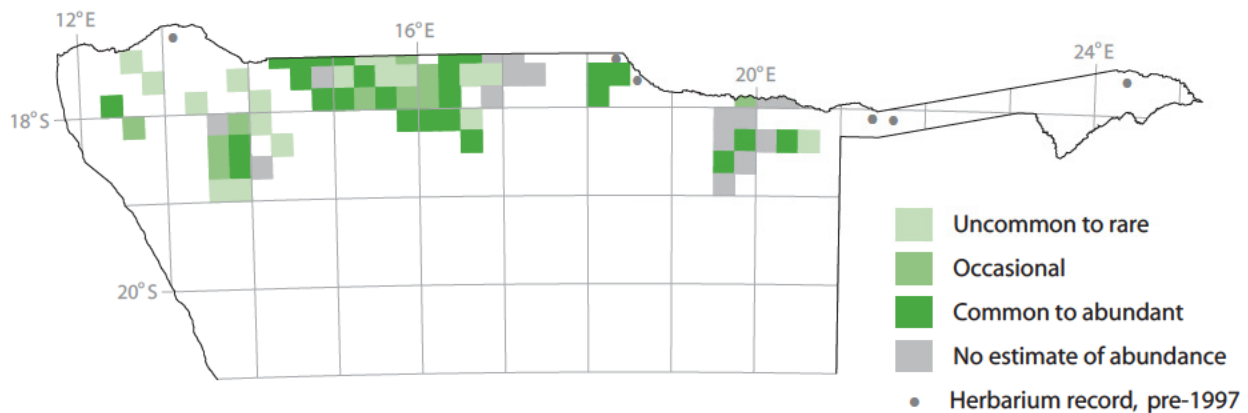
Weeping Candle-pod Acacia

Muisdoring (A); mangandjamba (H);
omutokano (Ok)

[113 records from 69 (6%) squares]



Generally a small, single-stemmed tree with a rounded or flattened crown. **FRUIT hanging pods.**



DISTRIBUTION & ABUNDANCE

Common to locally abundant in the north, and dominant in a few squares in the Cuvelai; generally uncommon in the north-west. There were no TAP records from Caprivi, but some earlier herbarium records.

HABITAT

Chiefly in areas where water collects, such as pans, dry rivers and floodplains in mixed woodlands or wooded grasslands, sometimes in riverine forest; grows on sandy substrates.

GROWTH FORM

Mostly shrubs of up to 3 m, but also shrubs or trees in the 3–8-m height class. There were many stands with individuals of various heights.

ANNUAL CYCLE

There were no records of annual cycle from July to September. **FLOWERS** only reported in October and December. **FRUIT** some recorded in every month in which observations were made. **LEAVES** always recorded.

GENERAL

Browsed by rhino, black-faced impala, dik-dik, kudu and springbok. Leaves and roots used medicinally. Wood used for construction and making tools. Roots used traditionally for hairdressing. Gum edible.

CONSERVATION CONCERNS

None recorded.