

Acacia tortilis

Umbrella-thorn

Haak-en-steek, krulpeul (A);
Ringelhülsenakazie (G); orusu (H);
/narab (K); kamutaka (O)

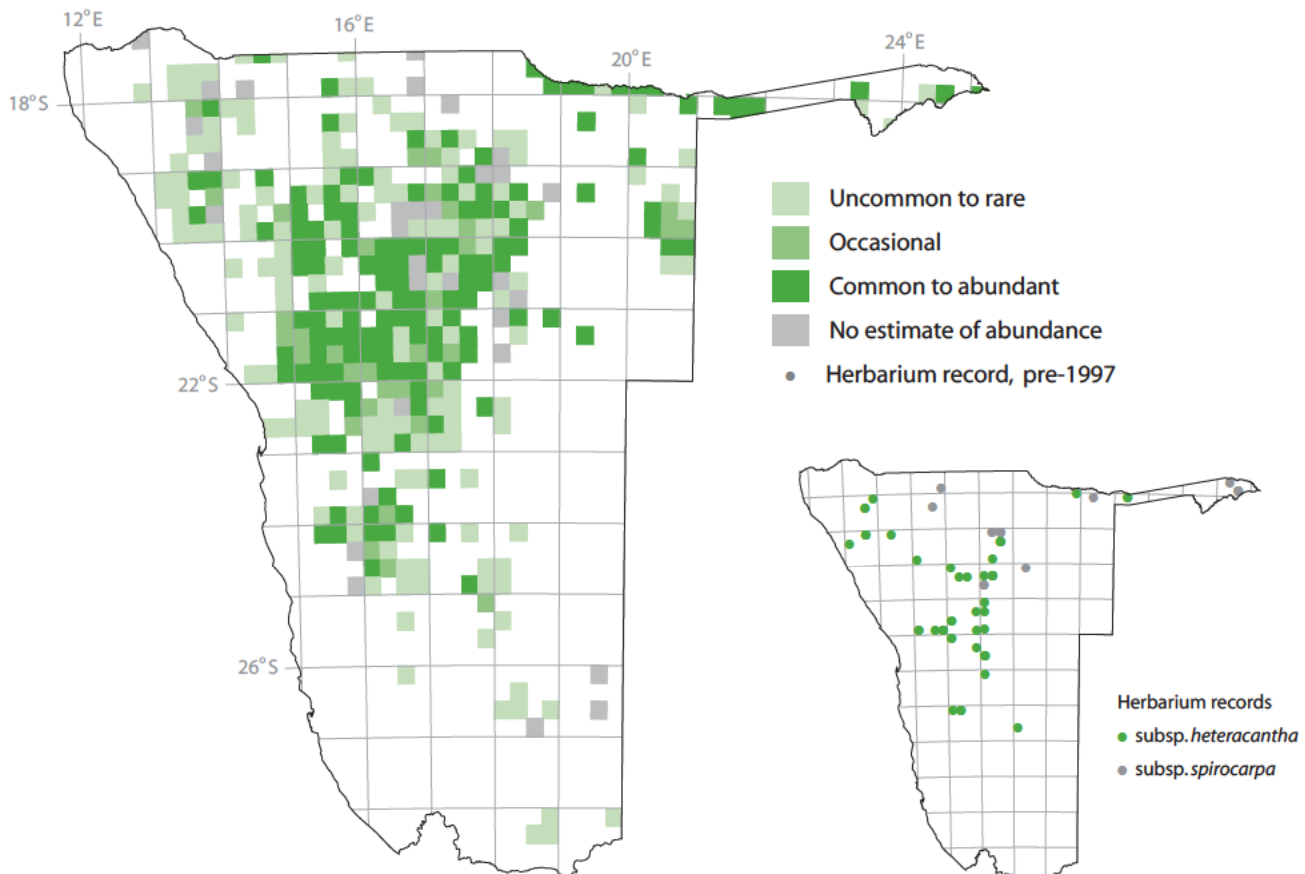
Generally a medium-sized tree with **spreading, flattened crown**. Two subspecies occur in Namibia, neither of which is the truly flattened 'umbrella thorn' of east Africa. **BARK dark, fissured**. **THORNS** paired, both straight or both hooked or one of each in a pair (in which case, the hooked one may be very inconspicuous). **LEAVES greyish, small, with very small leaflets**. **FLOWERS** in **small, creamy-white balls**. **FRUIT** a **twisted pod**.

The flowers are fairly conspicuous, the pods easily overlooked from a distance.

Acacia tortilis may be confused with *A. luederitzii* when not in pod. Young trees may resemble young *A. erioloba*, as they often only have straight thorns. This species has probably been under-recorded by the TAP, especially south of Mariental.

Since the subspecies can only be told apart by the pods, which are inconspicuous at a distance and often not found, the majority of records could not be assigned to one or other subspecies. The most common subspecies is *heteracantha*, thus all records not specifically *spirocarpa* have been assigned to the former.

The combined distribution and abundance for both subspecies are shown below.



A. tortilis subsp. *heteracantha*

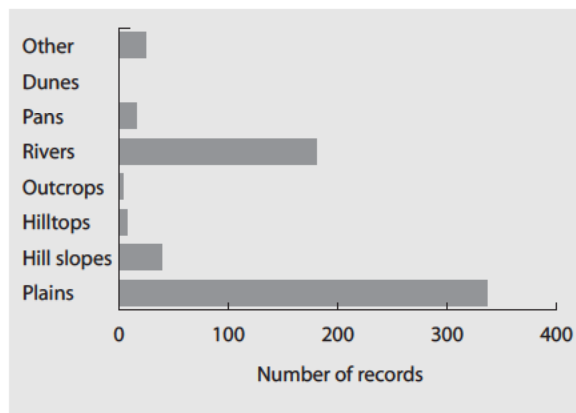
[1,102 records from 353 (33%) squares]

CROWN more rounded than that of subsp. *spirocarpa*. FRUIT pods are hairless or almost so, without glands and generally tightly coiled.



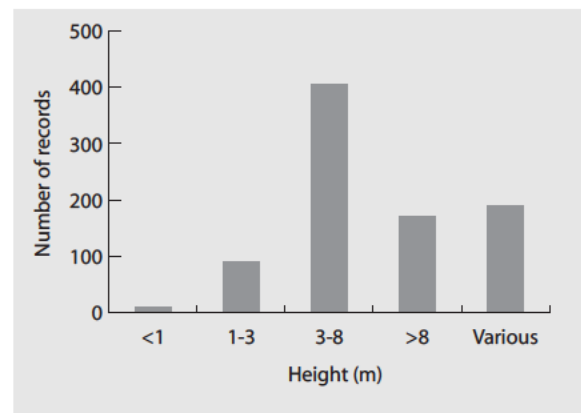
HABITAT

Most commonly found on plains and along rivers; also around pans in the central-west. Substrates range from sand to dolomite hill slopes to calcrete.



GROWTH FORM

Usually a tree 3–8 m high (62% of records), but about 23% of the trees were taller than 8 m. About 24% of the stands recorded had trees of variable heights. Tall trees occurred throughout the range, with most in the Karstveld and north-central areas.



DISTRIBUTION & ABUNDANCE

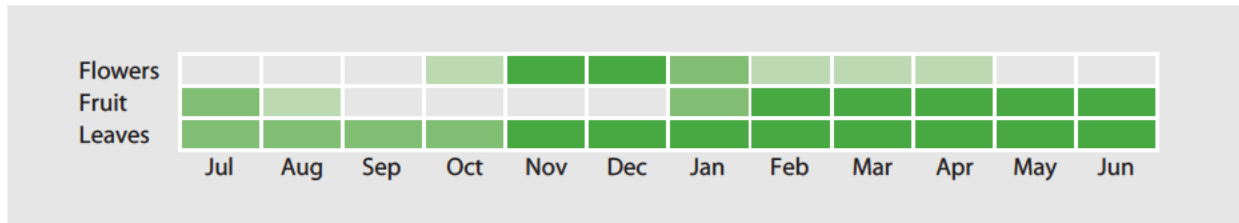
Common to uncommon, mostly in the central interior, extending to the north-west; scattered records from the north-east and south-east. Locally abundant and dominant in a few places. Most abundant and widespread on the north-central plateau. The records for the Nyae Nyae area and the south-east are range extensions.

GENERAL

Apart from providing good shade, this tree has a number of other uses. Its wood is used for fuel and construction, the branches for cattle fences, the bark to produce rope for housing and the roots to produce quivers. It produces an edible gum of medium quality. This tree is browsed by goats, antelope and rhino; and the pods, which are highly nutritious, are eaten by giraffe and antelope, and used for livestock fodder. The trees are occasionally infested by parasites (for example, *Tapinanthus* spp.). Also known as nuisance bush (SCH16, 2015C).

ANNUAL CYCLE (Both subspecies combined)

FLOWERS start in November and last until April, peaking in November and December. FRUIT present most of the year, but most common from January to June. LEAVES found all year round, but many trees bare between July and October; new leaves produced from August/September.

**CONSERVATION CONCERNS**

None recorded.

A. tortilis* subsp. *spirocarpa

[55 records from 32 (3%) squares]

CROWN generally somewhat flattened. FRUIT pods have a conspicuous, densely woolly covering with numerous dark red glands. They are generally less tightly curled.

**DISTRIBUTION & ABUNDANCE**

Found chiefly in the eastern Karstveld, with isolated records elsewhere in northern Namibia. Generally common, sometimes uncommon to rare.

HABITAT

Only found on plains.

GROWTH FORM

Usually a tree of 3–8 m (52% of tree records), but often over 8 m (40%). No stands of trees of various heights were recorded.

ANNUAL CYCLE

Combined with subsp. *heteracantha*.

CONSERVATION CONCERNS

None recorded.