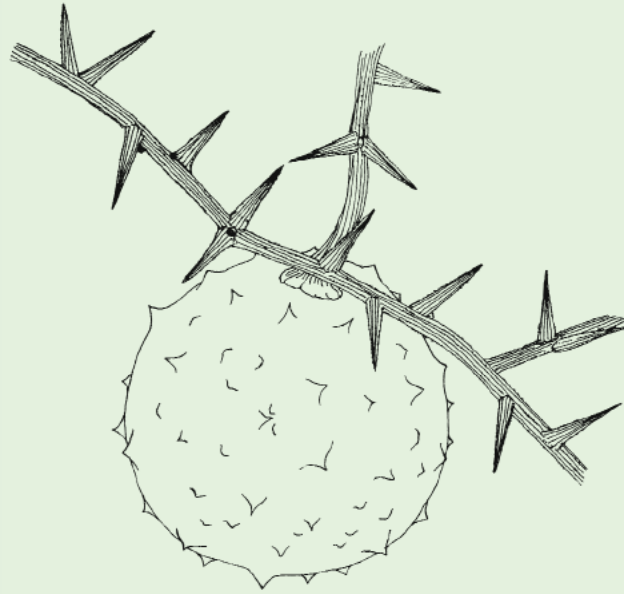


# *Acanthosicyos horridus*

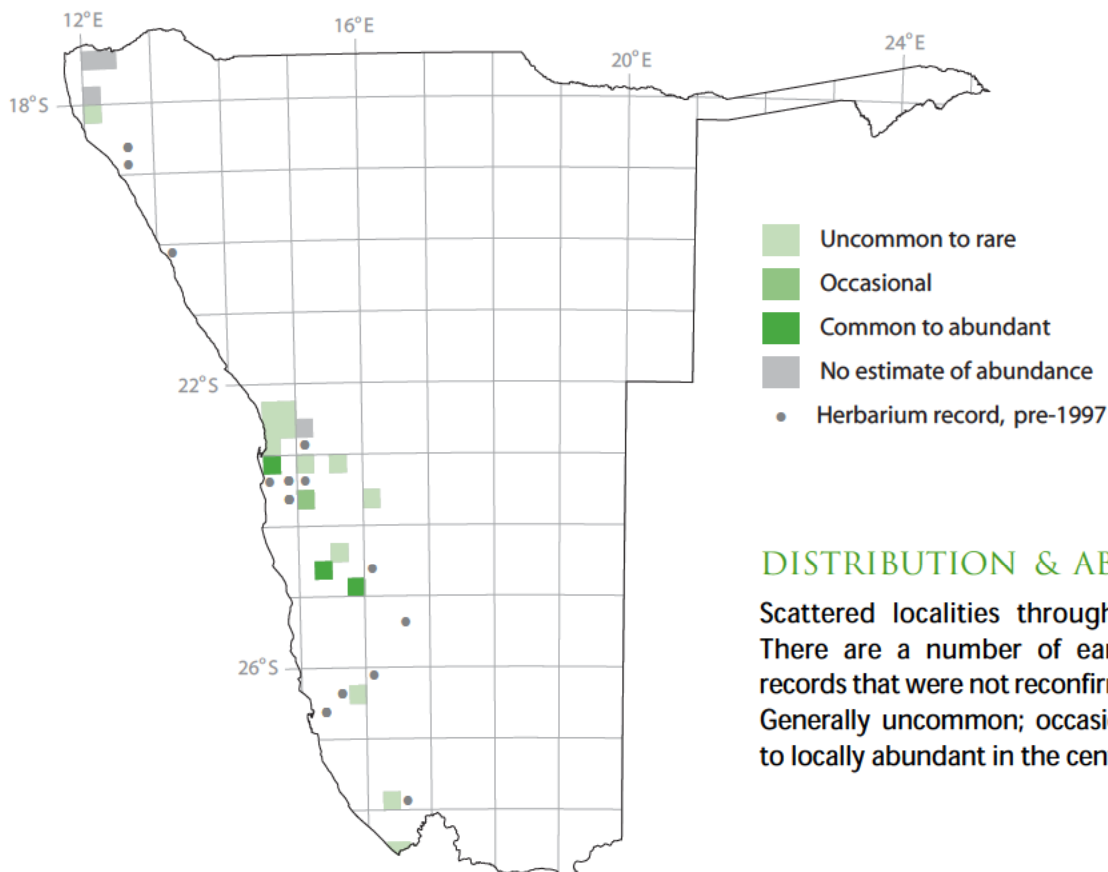
## !Nara

Botterpitte (A); omungaraha (H);  
!naras/b (K)

[42 records from 22 (2%) squares]



**Spiny, leafless**, spreading shrub with arching branches, **sprawling** over areas up to 10 m in diameter. BARK young branchlets grey-green, **finely longitudinally grooved**; with **paired straight thorns**. FLOWERS **yellow-green**; **bell-shaped**; male and female flowers on different plants. FRUIT a spherical or sub-spherical, grapefruit-sized, **spiny melon**.



### DISTRIBUTION & ABUNDANCE

Scattered localities throughout the west. There are a number of earlier herbarium records that were not reconfirmed by the TAP. Generally uncommon; occasionally common to locally abundant in the central-west.

## HABITAT

Mostly found on dunes and in dry river beds, but also on sand hummocks and along river banks, often causing the formation of sand hummocks. Mostly growing on sand.

## GROWTH FORM

Mostly a shrub in the 1–3-m height category, often a scrambler.

## ANNUAL CYCLE

FLOWERS recorded every month, but mainly in October; prolific flower buds recorded in June and July 1999. FRUIT recorded every month. LEAVES reduced to minute scales.

## GENERAL

The fruit are eaten by variety of wild animals such as rodents, jackal and antelope. The spreading bushes provide a microhabitat within the desert, which supports a myriad of small organisms. The fruit also forms an important part of the diet of locals; the roots and seeds are used medicinally and the fruit peels are fed to livestock.

## CONSERVATION CONCERNS

Endemic to the Namib Desert. Classified as 'Lower-risk, least concern' (Craven & Loots 2002). Often in large, but very localised, populations.

Right: *Acanthosicyos horridus*,  
flower, B. Curtis

Below: !Nara seed oil is used  
cosmetically, J. Pallett

