

Commiphora multijuga

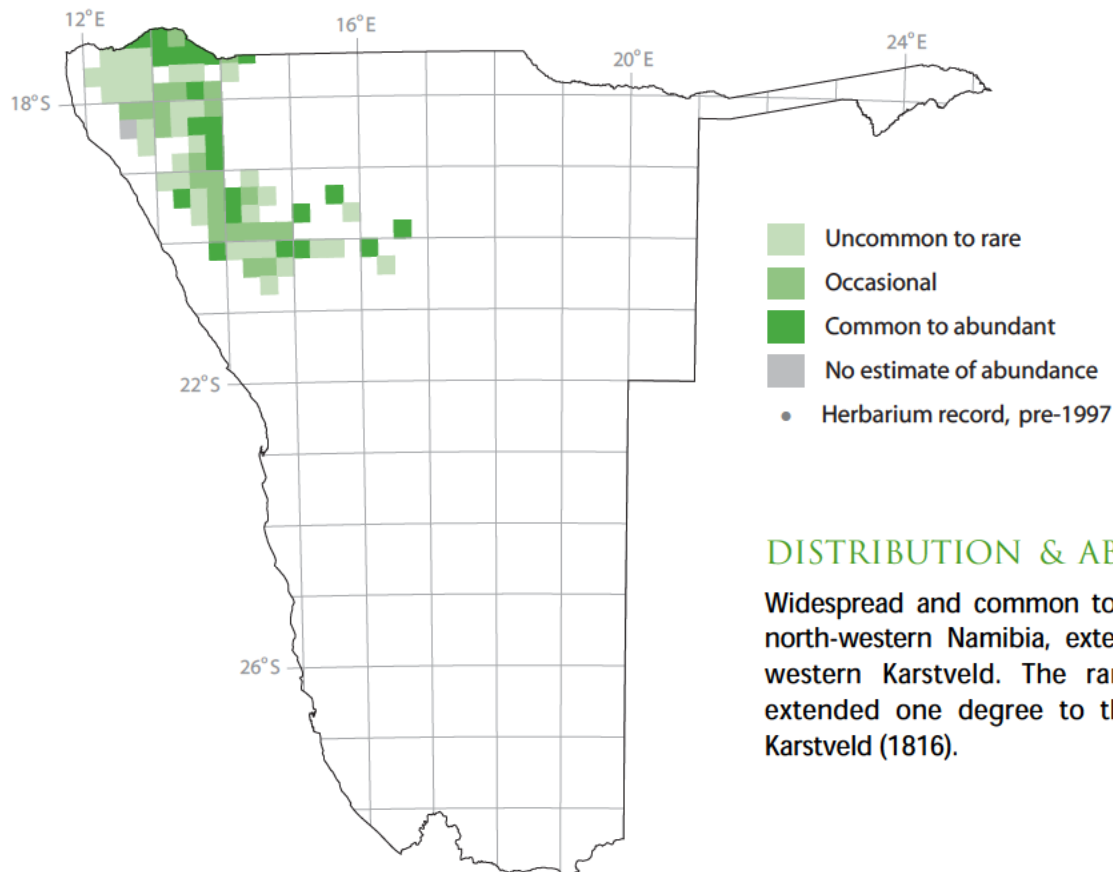
Omuzumba

Purple-stem commiphora (E);
Jochblättriger Balsambaum (G);
tsans (K)

[263 records from 87 (8%) squares]



Tree, usually single-stemmed. **BARK** smooth, red-grey to purple-grey or dark brown, not flaky; bark of old stems dark, occasionally splitting longitudinally. **LEAVES** compound, spirally arranged, 60–250 mm long; **petiolule** 10–15 mm long, slender; **leaflet** delicate, drooping, irregularly elliptic to diamond-shaped, 12–25 mm long; both surfaces dark green. **FLOWERS** cream-coloured to yellow, with petals noticeably curled outward. **FRUIT** ovoid to practically round, c. 15 mm in diameter; pseudaril red, four-lobed, practically reaching the tip of the seed.

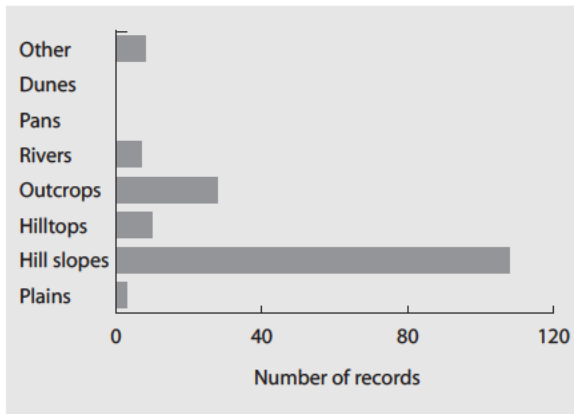


DISTRIBUTION & ABUNDANCE

Widespread and common to uncommon in north-western Namibia, extending into the western Karstveld. The range has been extended one degree to the east in the Karstveld (1816).

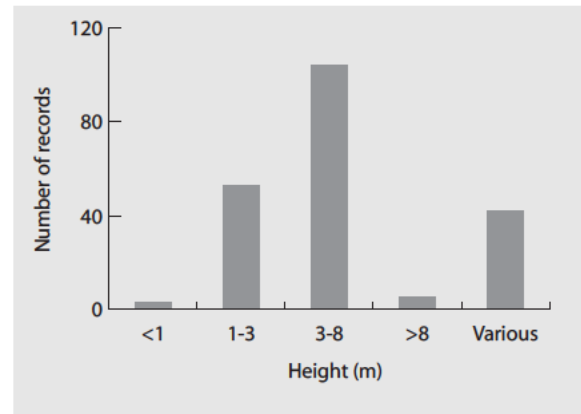
HABITAT

Found on hill slopes and rocky outcrops, growing on various rock types.



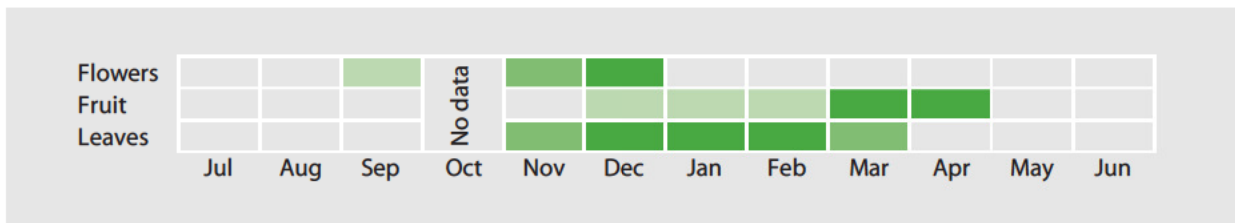
GROWTH FORM

A tree up to 8 m high, seldom taller.



ANNUAL CYCLE

No observations in October. FLOWERS mostly December, with records in September and November. FRUIT December to April, but mostly in March and April. LEAVES December until March, with new leaves in November.



GENERAL

Leaves browsed by small livestock. Strongly aromatic. Himba and Herero women mix the aromatic gum with fat for cosmetic purposes; the sticky, colourless resin can cause blinding; twigs have a pleasant taste and are used to clean teeth. An extremely attractive tree with contrasting bark and delicate leaves, of definite horticultural potential for frost-free areas.

CONSERVATION CONCERNS

Although this species is well used, it does not appear to be threatened. It is heavily damaged in many areas, possibly by animals such as elephant or baboon.

Commiphora multijuga. B. Curtis

