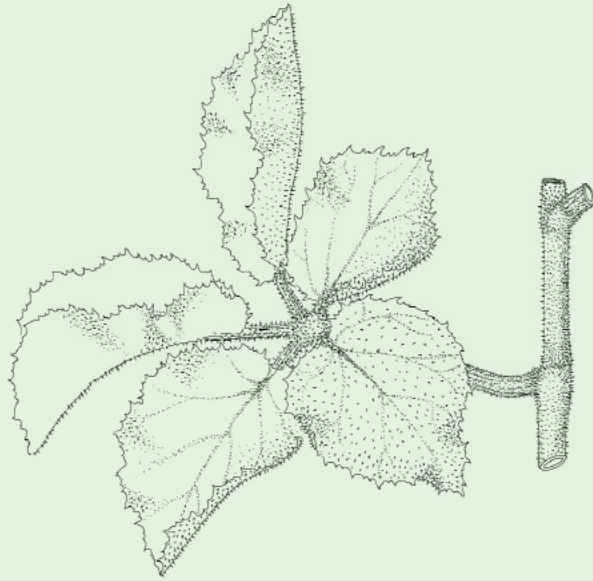


Cyphostemma uter

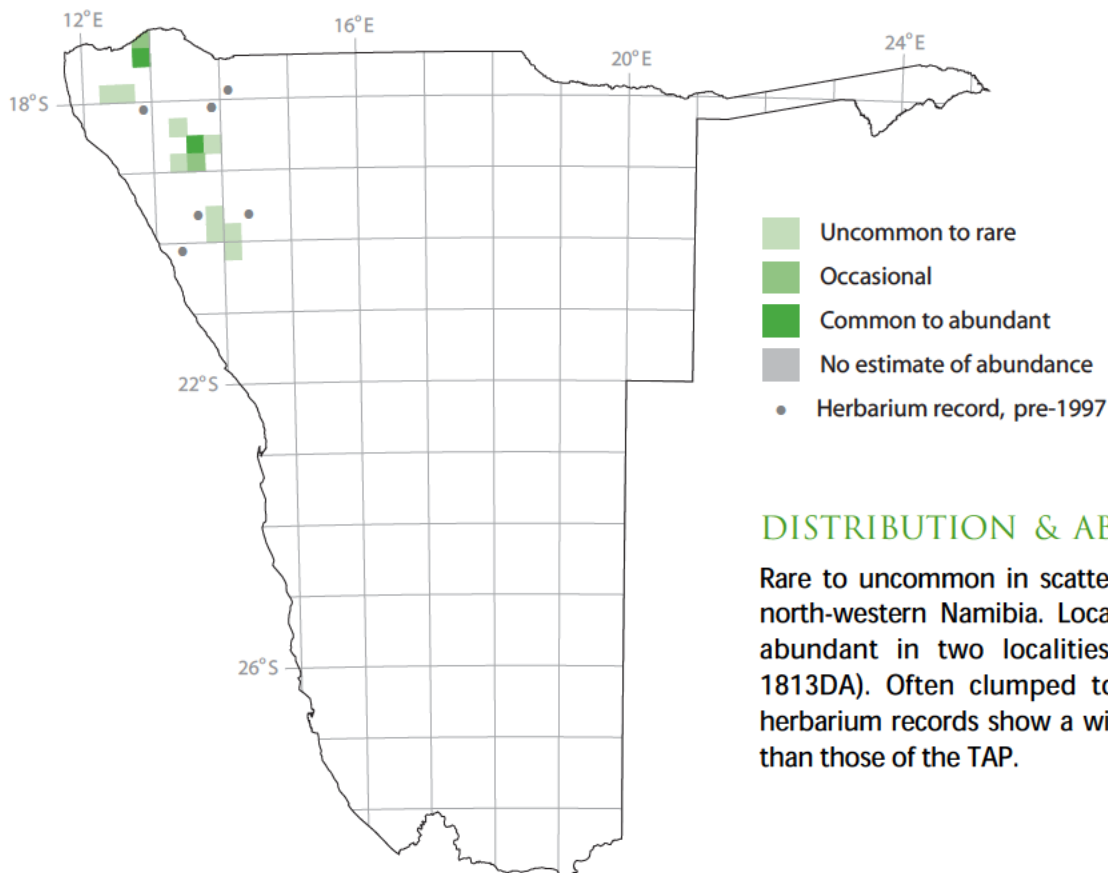
Kaoko Kobas

Omutindi (H); kowas (K)

[18 records from 11 (1%) squares]



Deciduous shrub or dwarf tree with **succulent stem**; much-branched from ground level. **BARK yellow to white**, smooth, horizontally grooved; **flaking off in thin, papery strips**. **LEAVES five-palmate, succulent; small** compared to other *Cyphostemma* spp.; conspicuous **glandular hairs**; **longitudinally folded** with apex somewhat recurved; light green, **finely woolly**; **margin irregularly toothed, fringed with hairs**. **FLOWERS** small, yellowish-green. **FRUIT** as clusters of red, grape-like berries.



DISTRIBUTION & ABUNDANCE

Rare to uncommon in scattered localities in north-western Namibia. Locally common to abundant in two localities (1712BD and 1813DA). Often clumped together. Earlier herbarium records show a wider distribution than those of the TAP.

HABITAT

Mostly found on rocky hill slopes.

GROWTH FORM

A shrub or dwarf tree, usually less than 1 m high, occasionally over 1 m. The leaves of the population in the valley to the west of the Baynes Mountains have exceptionally large leaves. This could be due to the fact that they are growing in shaded conditions under other trees.

ANNUAL CYCLE

Observations made in December, March, April and May. FLOWERS August to November. FRUIT November, December, February and March. LEAVES present in every month that observations were made.

Cyphostemma uter, Kaokoveld, B. Curtis

GENERAL

The peeling papery bark is used to carry honeycombs. The berries contain oxalic-acid crystals which cause severe mouth and throat irritation if eaten. Of horticultural potential for dry gardens.

CONSERVATION CONCERNS

Restricted to the greater Kaokoveld region including southern Angola. Vulnerable to horticultural overexploitation and illegal collection for the pachycaul trade. Protected by the Nature Conservation Ordinance. Recently assessed to be of 'least concern' according to IUCN criteria (Loots 2005). The lack of reconfirmation of earlier herbarium localities by the TAP could be due to atlasers not having been to those areas, or to a loss of the species there.



VITACEAE | GRAPE FAMILY

This family is composed mostly of climbing shrubs or woody vines with tendrils opposite the leaves. The genus *Cyphostemma* has four species with thick, succulent stems (pachycauls). The flowers are small and greenish-yellow, and generally in sprays held above the leaves. The fruit grow in bunches of attractive red, fleshy berries which are inedible due to the presence of crystals of oxalic acid.