

# *Hyphaene petersiana*

= *Hyphaene benguellensis*  
= *Hyphaene ventricosa*

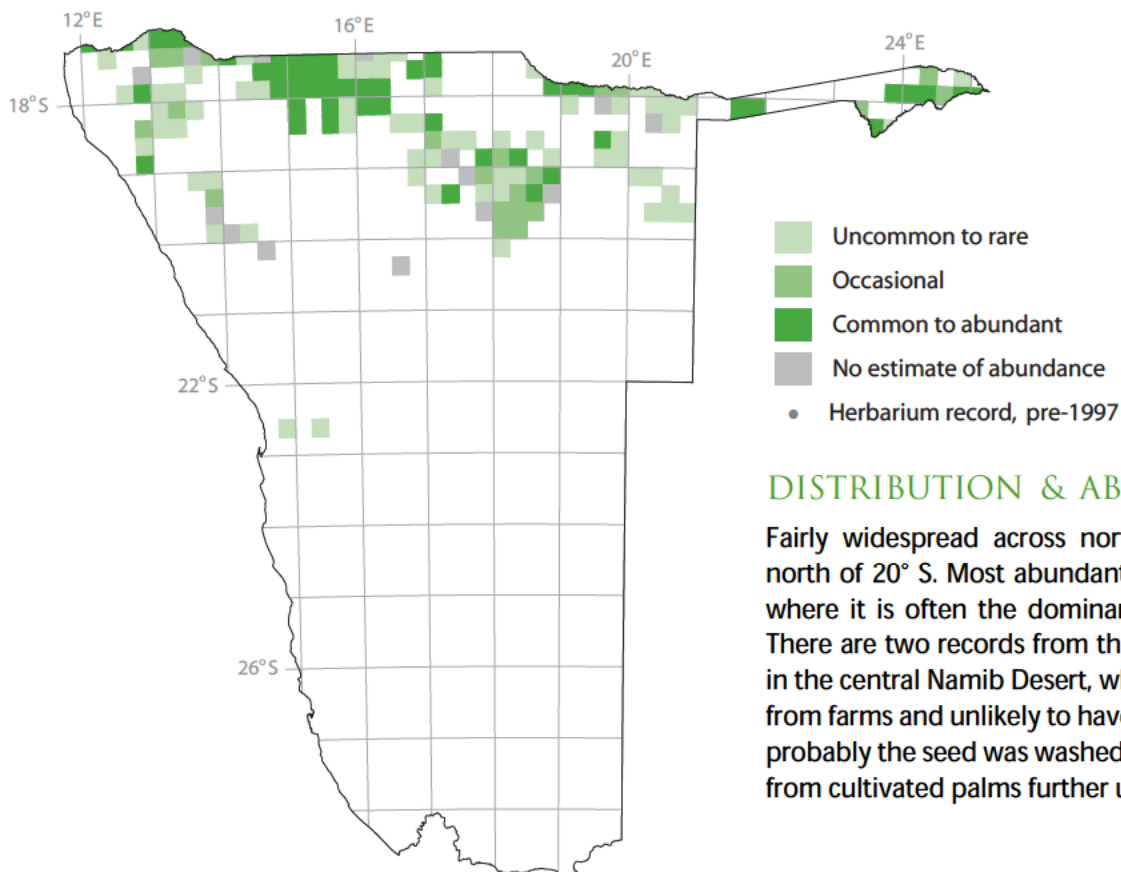
## Makalani Palm

Omulunga (H,O); epokola (Ok);  
mbare (T)

[472 records from 163 (15%) squares]



Single- occasionally many-stemmed palm. STEM often slightly swollen in the middle or upper section. LEAVES large, **fan-shaped**; petiole up to 1 m long, armed with sharp, black thorns. INFLORESCENCE up to 1 m long; male and female flowers on separate plants. FRUIT a **spherical brown nut**, c. 50 mm in diameter; seed single, with exceptionally hard ivory-coloured layer known as 'vegetable ivory'.

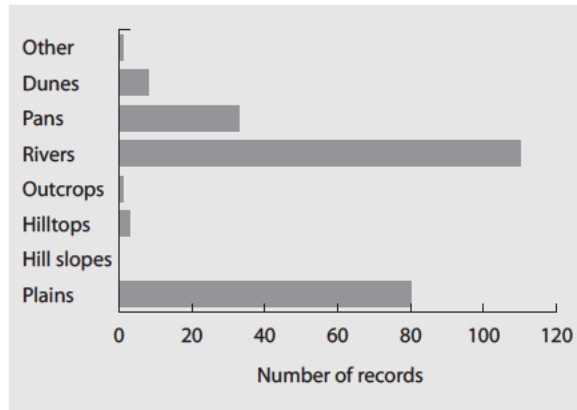


### DISTRIBUTION & ABUNDANCE

Fairly widespread across northern Namibia, north of 20° S. Most abundant in the Cuvelai where it is often the dominant tree species. There are two records from the Swakop River in the central Namib Desert, which were away from farms and unlikely to have been planted; probably the seed was washed down the river from cultivated palms further upstream.

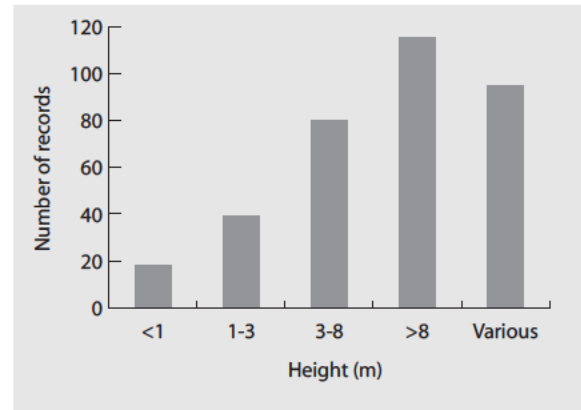
## HABITAT

Various, but mostly on sandy plains. Associated with rivers and floodplains in the north-west and north-east, and pans and oshanas in the Cuvelai.



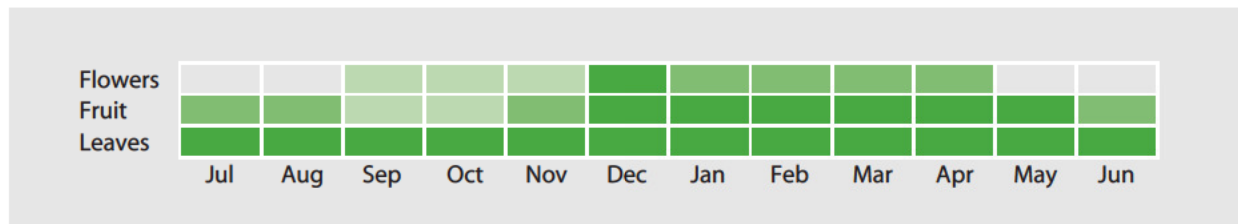
## GROWTH FORM

Mostly a tree of 3 m to over 8 m high, but shrubby forms less than 3 m. Many young plants recorded.



## ANNUAL CYCLE

FLOWERS September to April, but mostly December. FRUIT throughout the year, but mostly December to May. LEAVES evergreen.



## GENERAL

All parts of this species are used in a variety of ways, and only those uses recorded by atlassers have been listed here. The seeds are used extensively for carving souvenirs for the tourist industry. Elephants eat the fleshy layer of the fruit. People in the north tap the trees for sap from which they make an alcoholic beverage. The leaves are used for a variety of purposes; threads are stripped from the edges to use as dental floss.

## CONSERVATION CONCERNS

Although heavily exploited, *H. petersiana* has good regenerative abilities and there are plenty of young plants around. Nevertheless, it should be monitored as extensive harvesting of nuts in some areas may have an effect on recruitment in the future.

*Hyphaene petersiana*, Kaokoveld, B. Curtis

