

Melianthus *comosus*

Tintenbusch

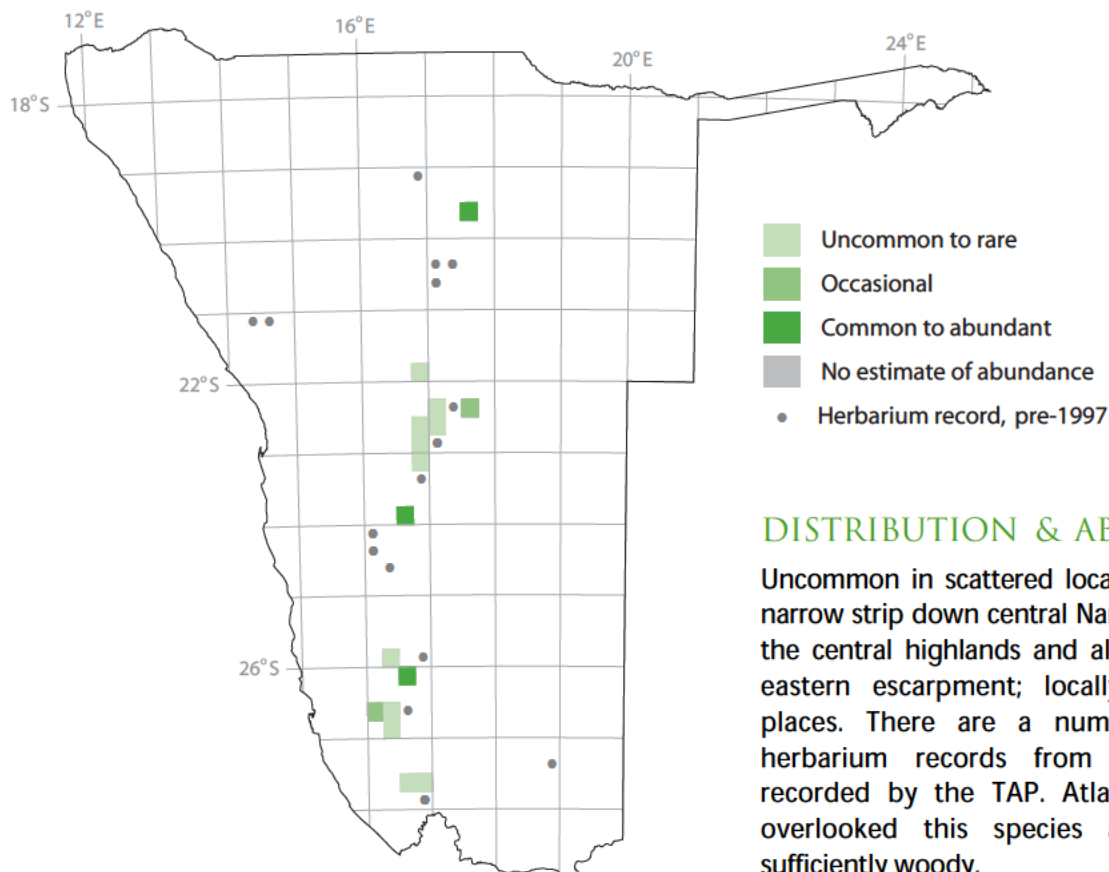
Touch-me-not (E); kruidjie-roer-my-nie (A); /ing (K)

[29 records from 16 (1%) squares]



Rounded shrub with softly woody stems. LEAVES compound, clustered at ends of branches, **drooping; petiole and rachis somewhat flattened to narrowly winged**; leaflets lanceolate; dull, dark grey-green above; pale green to dirty yellow and velvety below; **often folded along midrib; deeply toothed**. FLOWERS **fairly large and conspicuous**, in a hanging spray **below the leaves, scarlet**; asymmetric with the **flower-base boat-shaped** with four long, curved stamens. FRUIT a **papery, four-winged inflated capsule**.

Flowers and fruit conspicuous.

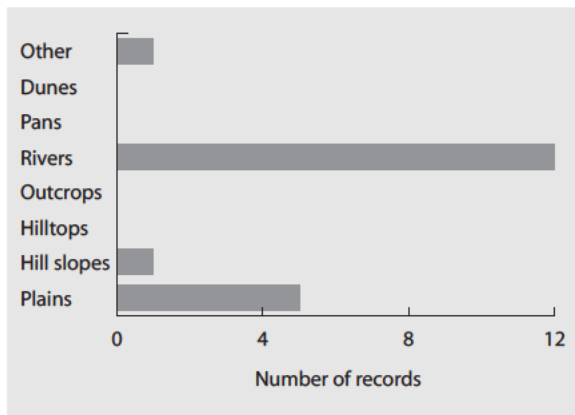


DISTRIBUTION & ABUNDANCE

Uncommon in scattered localities in a long, narrow strip down central Namibia, mostly in the central highlands and along the southeastern escarpment; locally common in places. There are a number of earlier herbarium records from localities not recorded by the TAP. Atlassers probably overlooked this species as not being sufficiently woody.

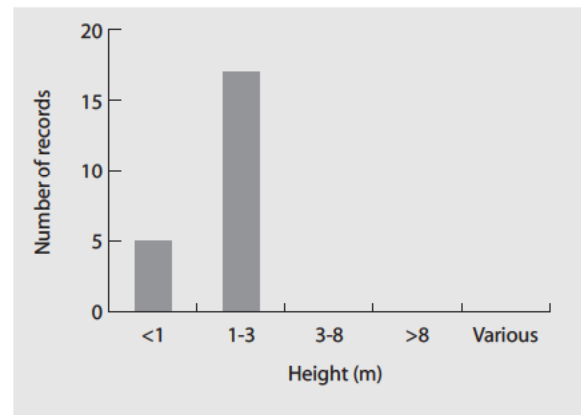
HABITAT

Found in seasonally inundated places; mostly along dry watercourses, but also on plains, road verges and along the margins of dams. Grows on sandy or gravel substrates.



GROWTH FORM

A shrub, generally in the 1–3-m height class. In 2217BC some large individuals, of up to 2 m high and with diameters of c. 2.5 m, were recorded (FRI2).



ANNUAL CYCLE

FLOWERS April to November, but seems to be mostly September. **FRUIT** a few records most of the year; fruiting, when it occurs, is usually quite profuse. **LEAVES** mainly October to June, with young leaves September to November; sometimes with dry, old leaves in winter.

GENERAL

The flowers are visited by many insects. Leaves and other parts are used medicinally; the leaves are also boiled and eaten, as well as the flowers. Of horticultural potential, as this plant is frost-hardy and has very attractive foliage, flowers and fruit.

CONSERVATION CONCERNS

None recorded.

Melianthus comosus, Southern Namib,
C. Mannheimer

