

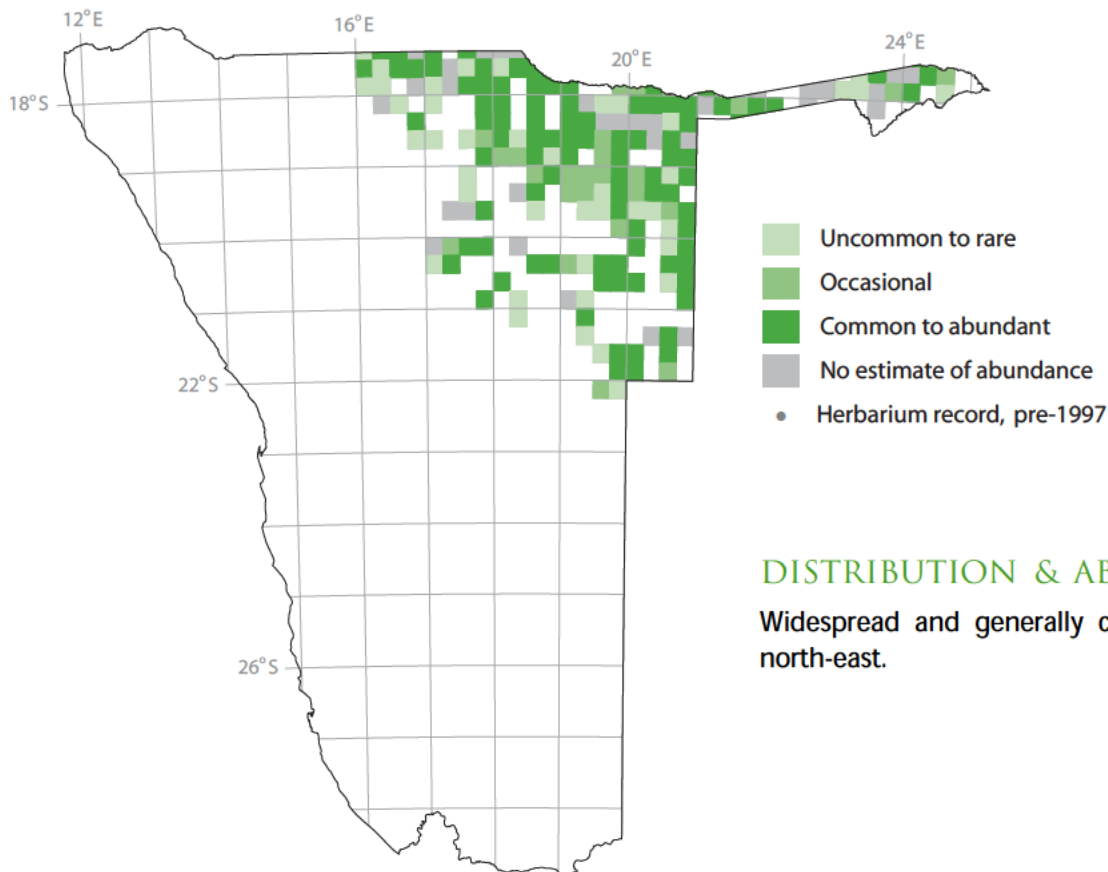
Ochna pulchra

Lekkerbreek

Peeling-bark ochna (E); kyala (Kx);
muywela (L); muzwe (Rk, Rum)

[364 records from 192 (18%) squares]

Deciduous shrub or tree, with sparsely branched crown. BARK **smooth, blue-grey**, flaking off in thick strips to expose a cream-coloured to **orange-brown underbark**; on thinner branches the growth of successive years is clearly differentiated by colour. LEAVES simple, elliptic, 50–110 mm long, leathery; shiny, green-yellow above, duller below. FLOWERS pale, greenish-yellow; petals falling early; **sepals pink to red**, 12 x 8 mm. FRUIT a **black berry**, c. 14 mm long; enclosed in the conspicuous persistent calyx.

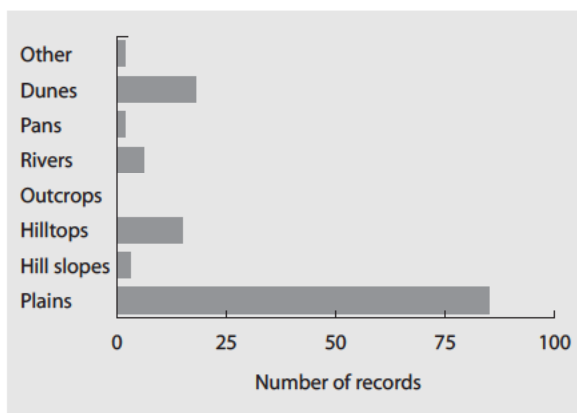


DISTRIBUTION & ABUNDANCE

Widespread and generally common in the north-east.

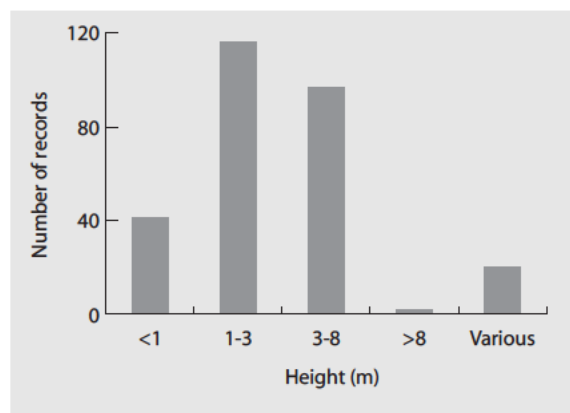
HABITAT

Found in various habitats, but mostly on plains.



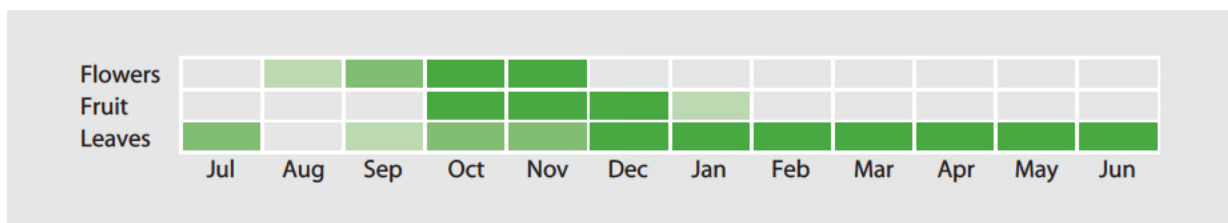
GROWTH FORM

Equally often trees as shrubs. Mostly in the 1–3-m and 3–8-m height classes, but can be over 8 m tall. About 30% of the stands observed had plants of various heights.



ANNUAL CYCLE

FLOWERS August to November. **FRUIT** October to January. **LEAVES** October to July, with new leaves from August to October.



GENERAL

A rain-dependent species (FRI1). The young leaves are toxic. The wood has various uses; ripe seed has a high oil content, which is used for cooking and polishing metal; the leaves and roots are used medicinally. The Afrikaans common name, 'lekkerbreek', refers to the fact that twigs are easily broken – they do not bend much before snapping cleanly. This plant is of horticultural potential for frost-free areas as the bark, flowers and fruit are attractive.

CONSERVATION CONCERN

None recorded. Protected by forestry legislation.

Ochna pulchra, fruit, C. Hines

