

# *Phyllanthus reticulatus*

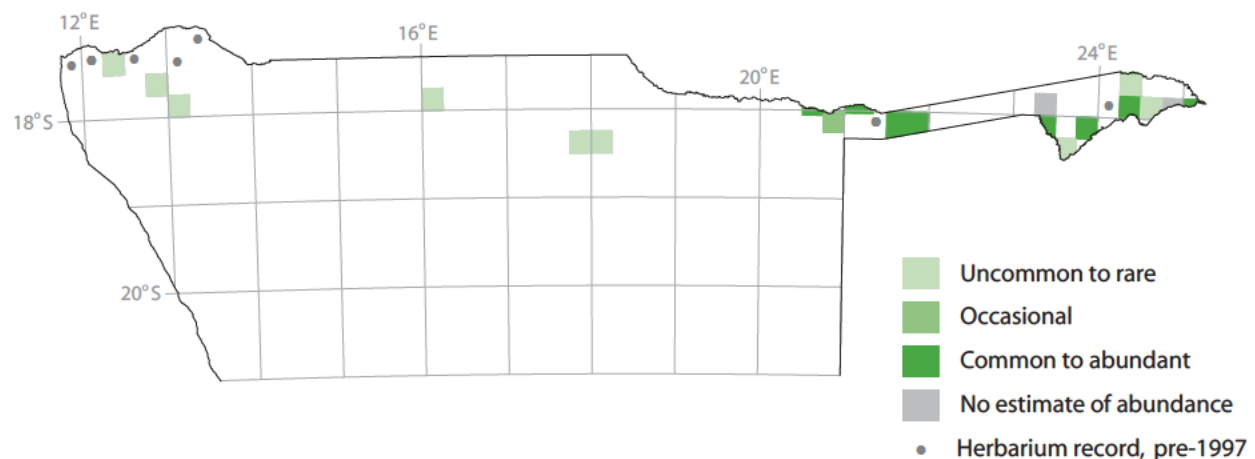
## Potato-bush

Aartappelbos (A); okahonukondu (H); chizeze (L)

[28 records from 22 (2%) squares]

Evergreen shrub or small twiggy tree. BARK grey to brown, smooth; branchlets drooping. LEAVES simple, alternate, ovate to oblong; **conspicuous red net-veins** below. FLOWERS axillary, small, yellowish-green or reddish; male and female flowers respectively grouped together; appearing before or together with the leaves. FRUIT a small capsule; **black and splitting open when ripe**.

May be confused with *Flueggea virosa*, but the fruit of *P. reticulatus* is black and the leaves are smaller, while the leaves of *F. virosa* are larger and the fruit is white.



## DISTRIBUTION & ABUNDANCE

Uncommon in the north-west and just north-east of the Karstveld; common along the Okavango River; uncommon to common to abundant in eastern Caprivi. The records in the central-north are range extensions according to earlier herbarium specimens, but the plant was possibly overlooked by atlasers along the lower Kunene River.

## HABITAT

Mainly found on river banks, but also on sandy plains or sand hummocks.

## GROWTH FORM

Generally a shrub 1–3 m high; occasionally a tree of over 3 m in eastern Caprivi.

## ANNUAL CYCLE

No observations from June to September. FLOWERS single records from February to June, and August, October and December. FRUIT single records from March to June, in August and from October to December. LEAVES recorded for every month of observation.

## GENERAL

The flowers have a smell of potatoes, hence the common name. The leaves are browsed by game and livestock. The fruit and roots are toxic; however, the roots are used medicinally.

## CONSERVATION CONCERNS

None recorded. The lack of TAP observations along the Kunene River is probably due to a lack of atlasing, rather than the loss of this species there.