

Sterculia africana

Sterculia / Omuhako

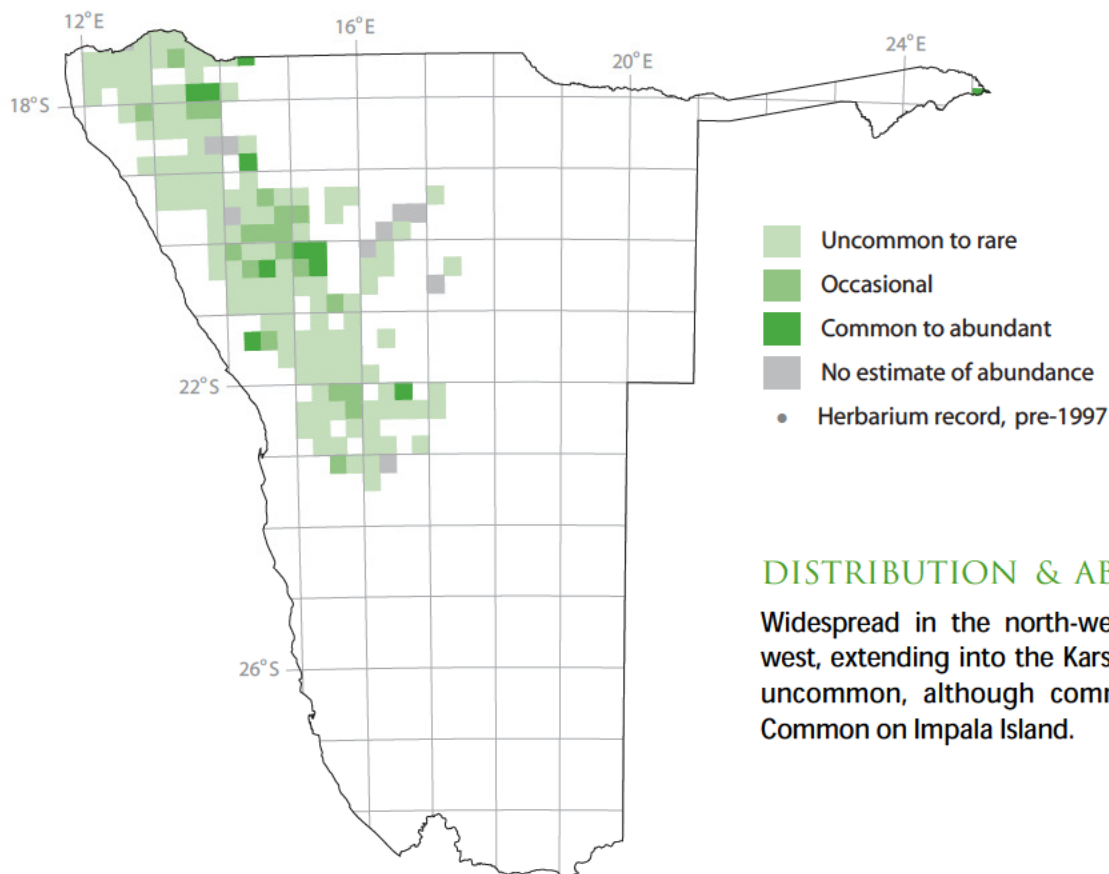
Tick tree (E); bosluisboom (A);
Sterkulie (G); mukosa (L);
#gúuge-anme/s (K)

[419 records from 171 (16%) squares]



A fairly thick-stemmed tree. BARK smooth, white to cream, often red-brown or purple; peeling in papery strips or woody discs to reveal a green underbark. LEAVES simple, with 3–5 lobes, 50–140 mm long; dark olive-green, rough; conspicuously seven-veined. FLOWERS green-yellow with red stripes, cup-shaped, up to 25 mm in diameter. FRUIT a dry, woody capsule, up to 150 mm long; borne in clusters of 3–5; densely hairy, beaked, mouth fringed with irritating bristles; splitting along one seam to form a boat-shaped receptacle. SEEDS blue-grey with a small, white aril at base; attached at edge of opening between the bristles like engorged ticks.

White-stemmed individuals may be confused with *S. quinqueloba*, which has larger and more deeply lobed leaves.

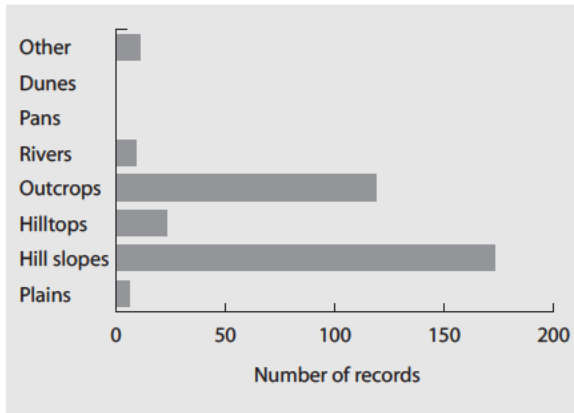


DISTRIBUTION & ABUNDANCE

Widespread in the north-west and central-west, extending into the Karstveld. Generally uncommon, although common in places. Common on Impala Island.

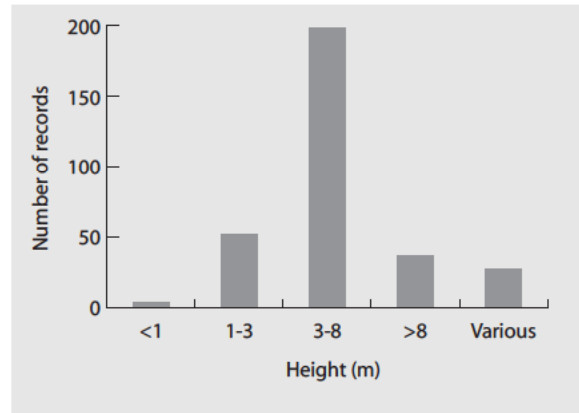
HABITAT

Found on rocky outcrops and rocky hill slopes; hilltops in the north-west; rarely on sandy plains. Often the most conspicuous tree on a rocky outcrop.



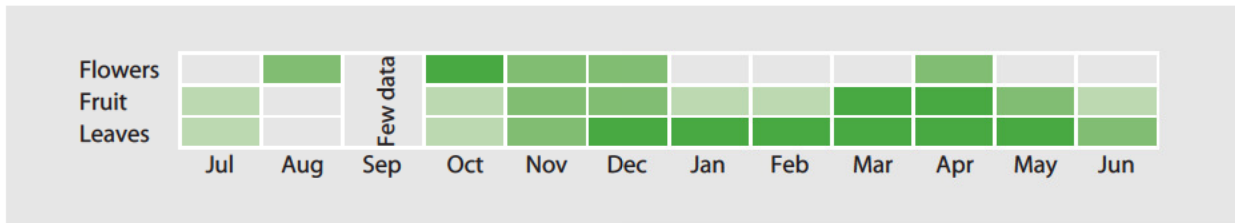
GROWTH FORM

A tree up to 8 m high or taller. Occasionally stunted in rock fissures or after damage by elephant. Few young plants recorded.



ANNUAL CYCLE

FLOWERS mainly October, continuing until December, with a smaller flush in April and an early flush in August; individual trees with flowers have been recorded almost every month. FRUIT some records every month, but mostly March and April; a record of fruit present does not indicate that there will be seed, as these are shed soon after the pod splits open. LEAVES November to June, mainly.



GENERAL

Of immense horticultural potential for dry gardens and the pachycaul trade. The trunk is attractive all year round. Known as 'false baobab' on Impalila Island.

CONSERVATION CONCERNS

None recorded. Protected by forestry legislation.



Sterculia africana, B. Curtis