

*Strychnos pungens*Spine-leaved
Monkey-orange

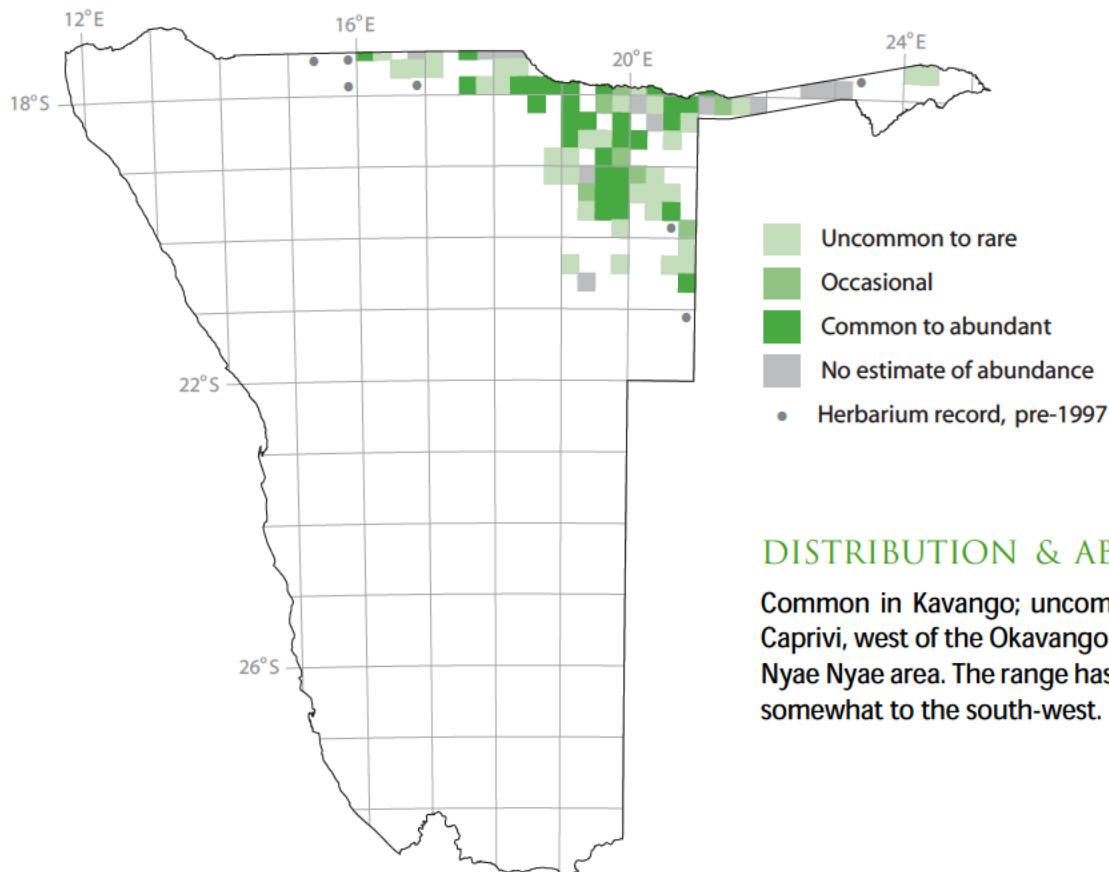
Steekblaarklapper (A); muhwawa (L);
omupwaka (O); utu (Rk, Rum);
ghutu (T)

[118 records from 86 (8%) squares]



Semi-deciduous tree with a **compact canopy and no thorns**. BARK pale grey, thick, corky, vertically and transversely grooved to form oblong fragments; pale green underbark. LEAVES elliptic-lanceolate, 60 mm long, leathery, rigid; shiny dark green above, with three prominent veins; **apex pointed with midrib extended as a pungent tip for c 2 mm**. FLOWERS green-white, up to 9 mm long. FRUIT round, up to 120 mm in diameter; initially blue-green, but yellow-brown when ripe; shell woody.

Can be confused with *S. cocculoides*, but *S. pungens* is distinctive in having rigid leaves with a spiny tip.

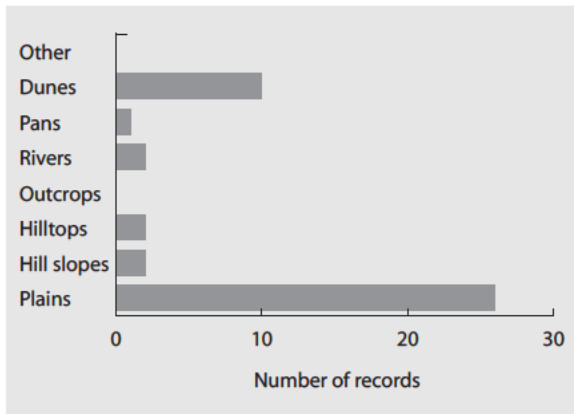


DISTRIBUTION & ABUNDANCE

Common in Kavango; uncommon in eastern Caprivi, west of the Okavango River and in the Nyae Nyae area. The range has been extended somewhat to the south-west.

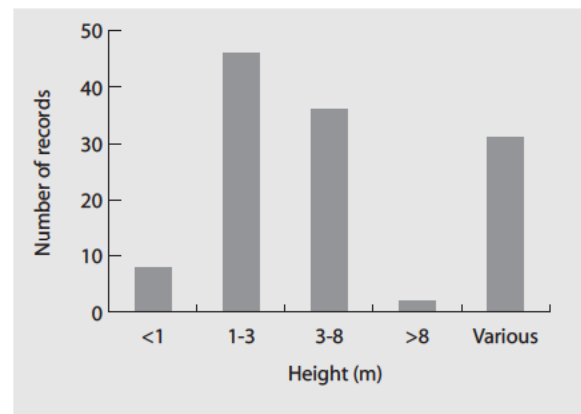
HABITAT

Mainly found on sandy plains and dunes in mixed woodland. Always on sandy substrates.



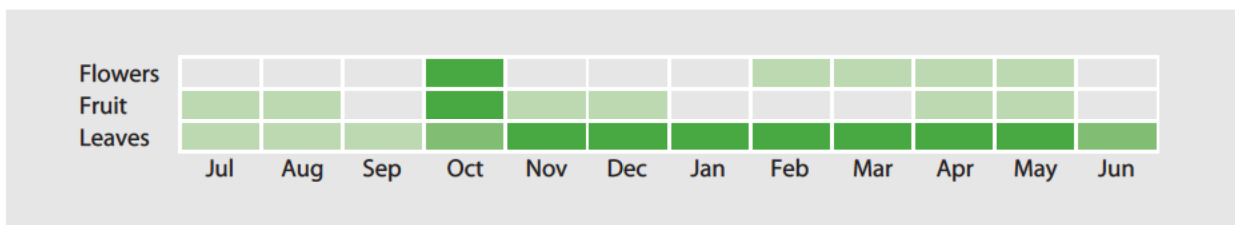
GROWTH FORM

Mostly a tree (60% of records), but often a shrub. Usually from 1–8 m high, rarely taller than 8 m.



ANNUAL CYCLE

FLOWERS mainly October, but with intermittent records from February to May. FRUIT mainly October, but recorded almost all year. LEAVES mainly October to June, with young leaves October to December.



GENERAL

Ripe fruit edible and palatable, but not as tasty as that of *S. cocculoides*. Some sources say that the seeds are edible, but green fruit and seeds are poisonous. The shell is used as a cup, cosmetic container, storage container for small items, or to make rattles. The roots and leaves are used medicinally. The leaves are sometimes browsed.

CONSERVATION CONCERNS

None recorded. Protected by forestry legislation.