Azima tetracantha

Four-thorns

Needle-bush (E); groendoring (A); Gründorn (G); onyarayongwe (= leopard’s claw, H)

[51 records from 28 (3%) squares]

A spiny, evergreen shrub with a tendency to scramble. Branchlets blue-green, often densely hairy; with four sharp, axillary spines up to 50 mm long. Leaves simple, opposite, with successive pairs at right angles to each other; elliptic-oblong to almost round; leathery. Fruit round, small; yellow to white when ripe.

Flowers and fruit are easily overlooked, but this plant cannot be confused with any other species.

DISTRIBUTION & ABUNDANCE

Mainly occurring in central Namibia, northwest of Windhoek. Two new, isolated records were collected from the south (confirmed by specimen MIL1/129) and the north (CUR1). Uncommon, but locally common to abundant, especially along river banks and on floodplains.
**HABITAT**

Mainly found on river banks, occasionally on plains. Also found in disturbed areas. This plant was found along 'most river banks in the Kunene Region' (BES1).

**GROWTH FORM**

Always a shrub, mostly in the 1–3-m height class. May be thicket-forming.

**ANNUAL CYCLE**

Flowers from August to June, but never many records per month. Fruit January to May. Leaves evergreen, with only one record of a bare plant in October.

**GENERAL**

Browsed by unspecified animals, but imparts a strange flavour to milk and butter from animals that have eaten it. Possible horticultural potential as a hedge plant.

**CONSERVATION CONCERNS**

None recorded.