Olea europaea

Wild Olive

Olienhout (A); kanongovandu (H); !goms (K)

[90 records from 28 (3%) squares]

Shrub or tree with dense, rounded crown and a greyish appearance. Leaves simple, oblong to narrowly lanceolate, 30–95 mm long; grey-green to shiny dark green, hairless above, densely covered in pale silvery to greenish scales below; margin entire, somewhat turned under; apex pointed to blunt; base narrowly tapering. Flowers small, whitish. Fruit an ovoid berry; black when ripe.

There is one subspecies in Namibia, africana.

DISTRIBUTION & ABUNDANCE

Widespread and fairly common in the eastern Karstveld, with scattered localities extending southwards, mainly along the escarpment, where it is uncommon. There are some earlier herbarium records from the central-west.
HABITAT

Found in various habitats; on plains in the Karstveld; along dry rivers in the central highlands and the south; on hill slopes in the south; and rocky outcrops in the south-west. Grows on rocky or gravel substrates, often calcrite.

GROWTH FORM

Mostly a tree in the 3–8-m height class.

ANNUAL CYCLE

Very few records of flowers or fruit. Flowers in October, with single records till February. Fruit from October to April, but mostly in March. Leaves evergreen.

GENERAL

The leaves are browsed by game and livestock. The wood is resistant to termites and wood-borers ( cerambycids), and is used for fencing and small articles. Various parts of the plant are used medicinally. An ideal garden plant, as it is frost- and drought-tolerant.

CONSERVATION CONCERNS

None recorded. Protected by forestry legislation.

Olea europaea subsp. africana,
L. Hoffmann