

Diospyros lycioides

Bluebush / Omuzeme

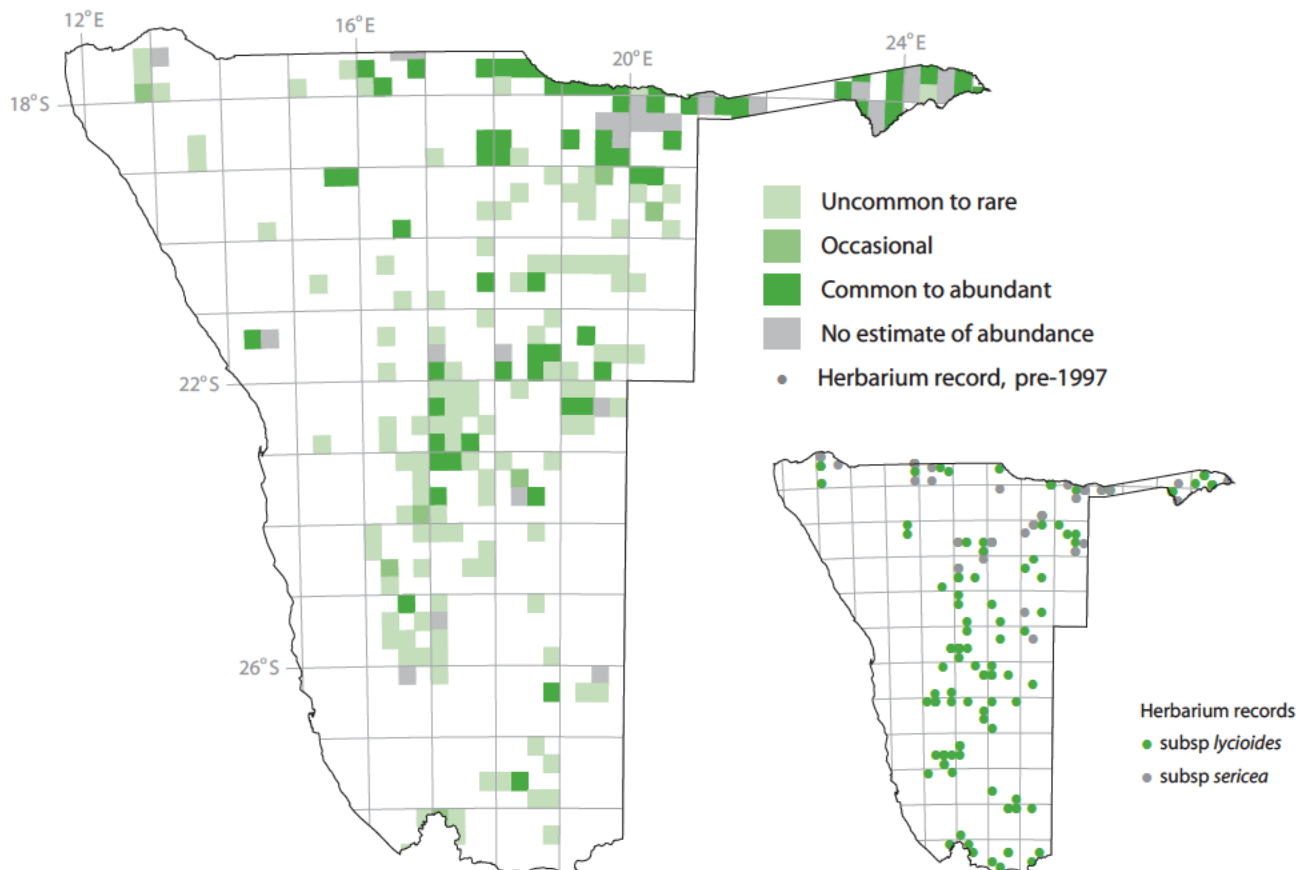
Bloubos (A); Zahnbürstenstrauch (G);
sihorowa (Rk, Rum)

[434 records from 222 (21%) squares]



Semi-deciduous shrub, occasionally a small tree. LEAVES simple, small, elliptic to oblanceolate; both surfaces olive-green, covered with **silvery** hairs. FLOWERS small, solitary, **cream-coloured to pale yellow**. FRUIT an ovoid berry; orange to red or red-brown, with **conspicuous calyx remains**.

Flowers may be overlooked, but the ripe fruit are conspicuous. There are two subspecies in Namibia, which can be separated by the visibly densely hairy leaves of subsp. *sericea* that are lacking in subsp. *lycioides*. Few atlassers were aware of this difference, hence most records were not differentiated to subspecies and the analysis has been done on the species as a whole.

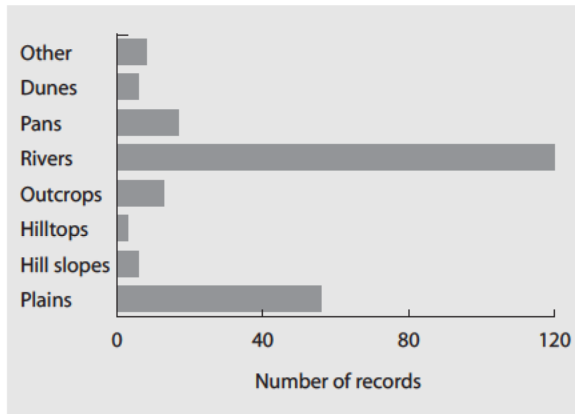


DISTRIBUTION & ABUNDANCE

Scattered throughout the whole of Namibia, except in the Namib Desert. Most abundant along rivers and on floodplains in the north-east; locally common in places in the Karstveld; generally uncommon in the rest of the country. Subspecies *lycioides* is the most common and widespread of the two subspecies, occurring over the whole range. Subspecies *sericea* occurs mostly in eastern Caprivi, but also in other very scattered localities in the north-east, extending north-westwards to the northernmost parts of the north-west.

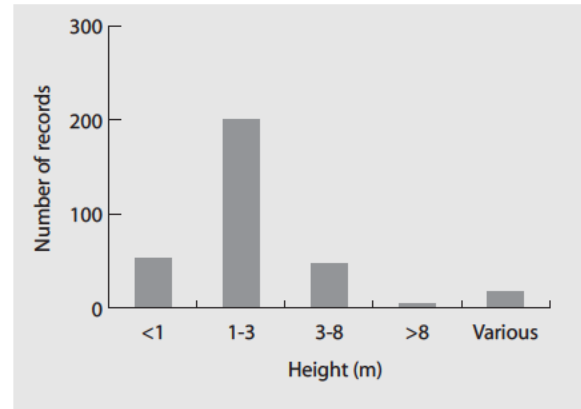
HABITAT

Found in various habitats, but mostly associated with watercourses and plains. Also found on pans in the central-east, on dunes in the south-east and rocky outcrops in the central highlands. Subspecies *sericea* was more often found on floodplains than subsp. *lycioides*. Grows on stony or rocky ground, as well as on sand.



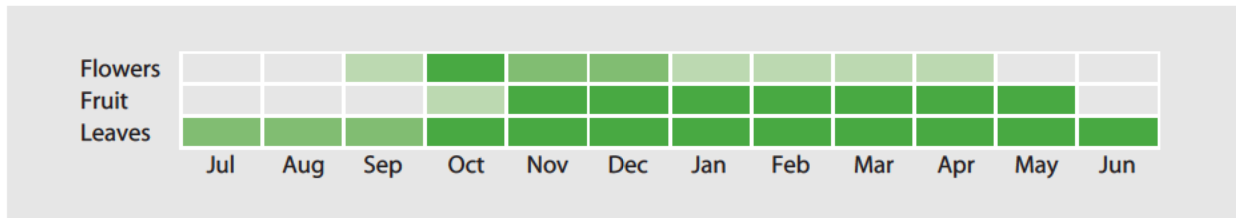
GROWTH FORM

Generally a shrub, but occasionally a tree (11% of records); up to 3 m high, usually, but sometimes taller than 3 m. Most of the stands less than 1 m high were recorded from the plains; those over 1 m were along rivers. Individual shrubs can have a diameter as wide as, or wider than, their height. They often tend to grow in clumps. Many small ones were noted growing in a depression in 2018DA (CUR1).



ANNUAL CYCLE

FLOWERS mainly October, but extending to April. FRUIT mostly from November to May, but a few recorded in October. LEAVES may be found all year, with some bare individuals in winter and with new leaves from September to November.



GENERAL

This plant is heavily browsed by game and livestock. The fruit is eaten by animals, as well as people, but has a laxative effect if consumed in large quantities (CUR1); also sometimes used to distill alcohol. The wood is used for kraal and hut construction, especially where smaller branches are needed. The roots of young shrubs are used as toothbrushes, and used medicinally.

CONSERVATION CONCERNS

None recorded.