

Ximenia caffra

Large Sourplum

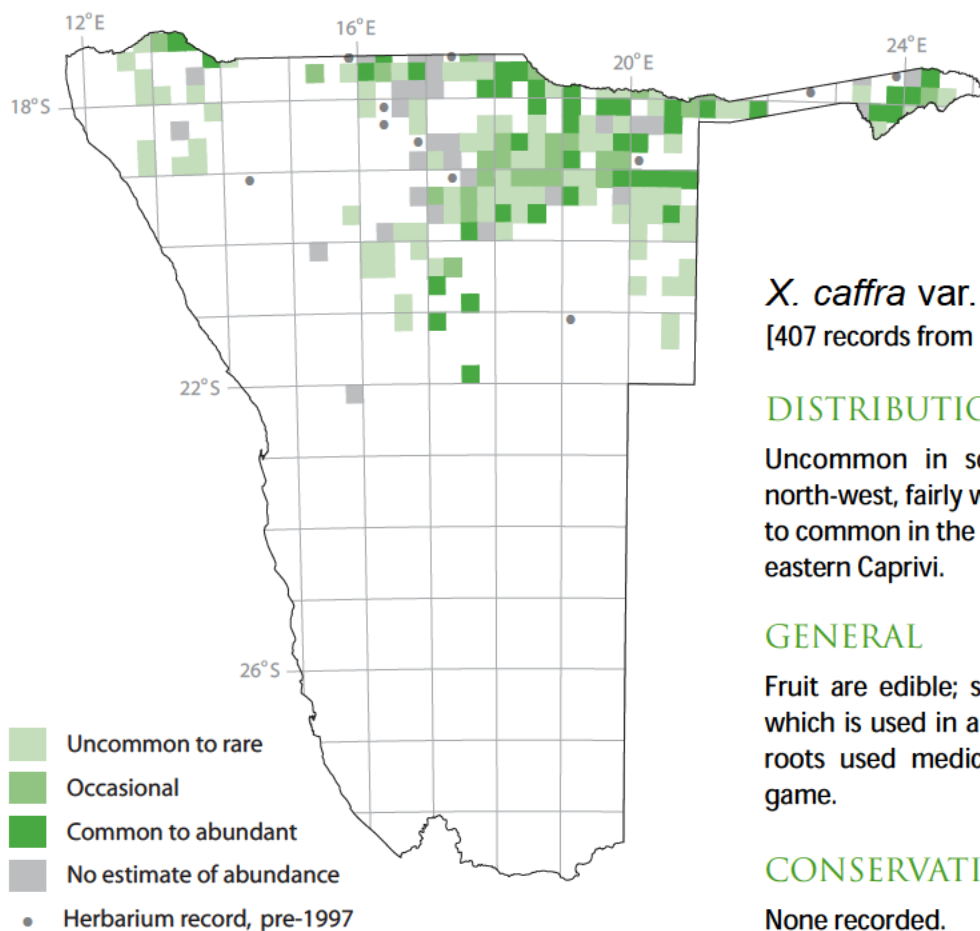
Groot suurpruim, rooipruim (A);
omumbeke (H); ombyu (O);
sipeke (Rk)



Semi-deciduous shrub or small tree with straight, brown thorns. LEAVES simple, longitudinally folded, dark green, somewhat leathery; apex blunt, often notched. FLOWERS fairly small, tubular. FRUIT an ovoid, somewhat fleshy stone-fruit; **pale yellow or orange-pink, becoming bright red** when ripe.

Flowers may be overlooked, fruit obvious.

There are two varieties in Namibia, with var. *caffra* far more common than var. *natalensis*. Any records not specifically designated, were assumed to be var. *caffra*. The two varieties are easily distinguished by the fact that the leaves and young branches of var. *caffra* are hairy, whereas those of var. *natalensis* are hairless to almost hairless.

*X. caffra* var. *caffra*

[407 records from 188 (18%) squares]

DISTRIBUTION & ABUNDANCE

Uncommon in scattered localities in the north-west, fairly widespread and uncommon to common in the north-east, and common in eastern Caprivi.

GENERAL

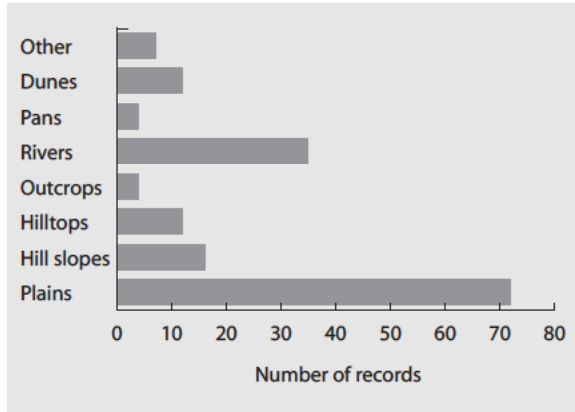
Fruit are edible; seeds contain a viscous oil which is used in a variety of ways; seeds and roots used medicinally; leaves browsed by game.

CONSERVATION CONCERNS

None recorded.

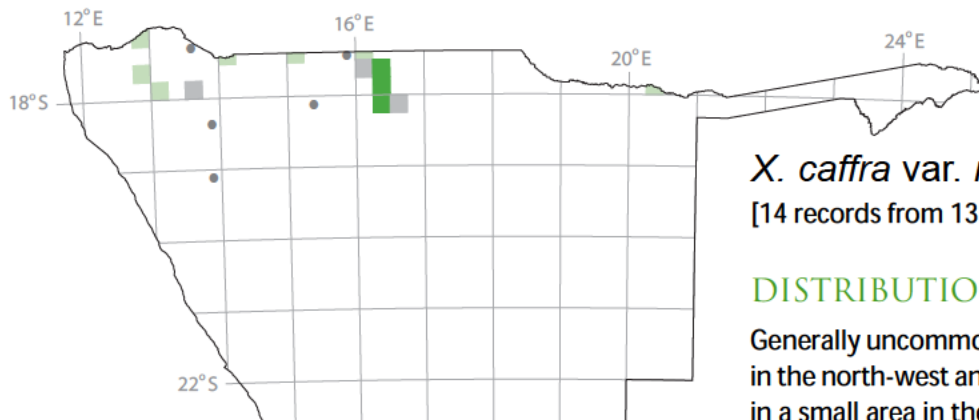
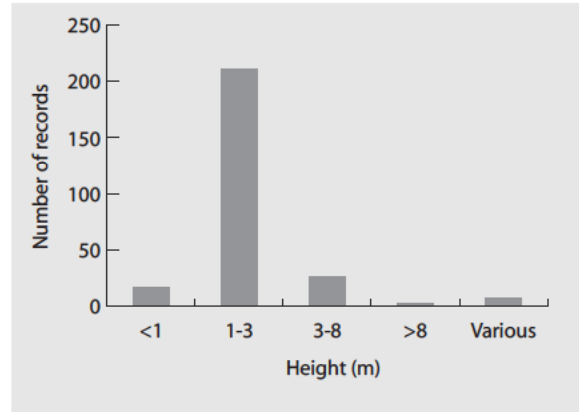
HABITAT

Found in various habitats, but mostly on plains, as well as along rivers and on dunes in the north-east, and hill slopes in the north-west; generally on sand or sandy loam.



GROWTH FORM

Usually a shrub (85% of records) in the 1–3-m height class, sometimes taller; occasionally a tree.



X. caffra var. *natalensis*
[14 records from 13 (1%) squares]

DISTRIBUTION & ABUNDANCE

Generally uncommon to rare in a few localities in the north-west and Cuvelai; locally common in a small area in the central-north.

HABITAT

Mostly along dry river courses, sometimes on plains.

GROWTH FORM

Predominantly a shrub, but more often tree-like than var. *caffra*.

ANNUAL CYCLE

Records for both varieties amalgamated. FLOWERS mainly October, with single records most months. FRUIT mainly November to February but recorded up to July. LEAVES usually some, but with highest records of bare trees in September; leaf buds in August and September and young leaves October to December.

