

Ximenia americana

Blue Sourplum

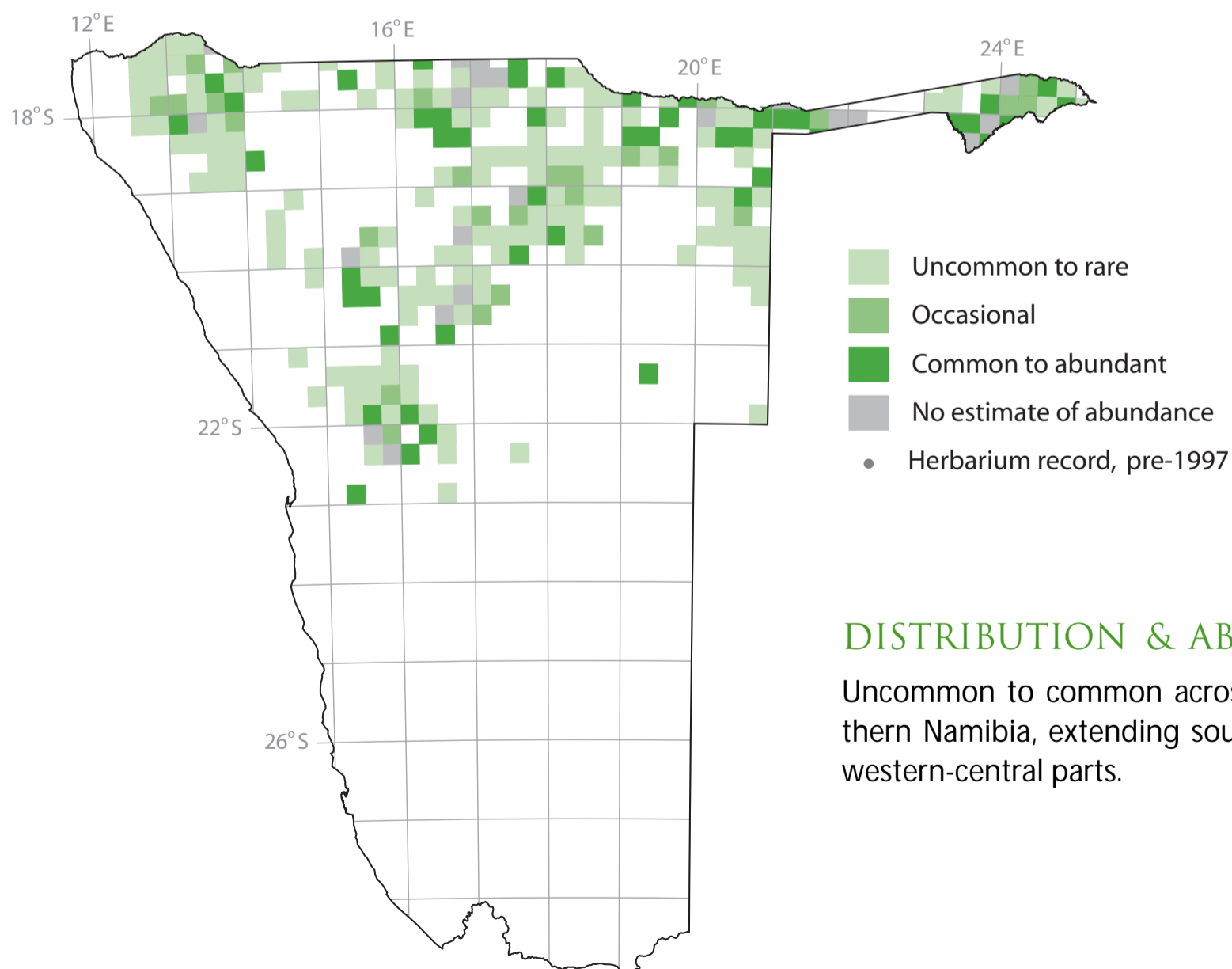
Blousuurpruim, geelpruim, kleinsuurpruim (A); omuninga (H); mungomba (L); omheke (O); kakukuru (R)

[602 records from 250 (23%) squares]



Usually a many-stemmed shrub with straight thorns, forming a thicket; occasionally a small tree. **BARK young branchlets blue-green.** LEAVES simple, semi-succulent, usually folded along the midrib; **both surfaces blue-green, hairless, with a dull, waxy coating.** FRUIT an ovoid, quite fleshy stone-fruit; **yellow to orange when ripe.** Flowers may be overlooked, fruit obvious.

There are two varieties in Namibia, of which the more common one, by far, is var. *microphylla*, which has smaller, bluer-green leaves than var. *americana*. Most atlassers were not aware that there are two varieties and thus no distinction has been made between them. Not all herbarium records have been correctly determined, thus no map is available for distribution of the varieties.

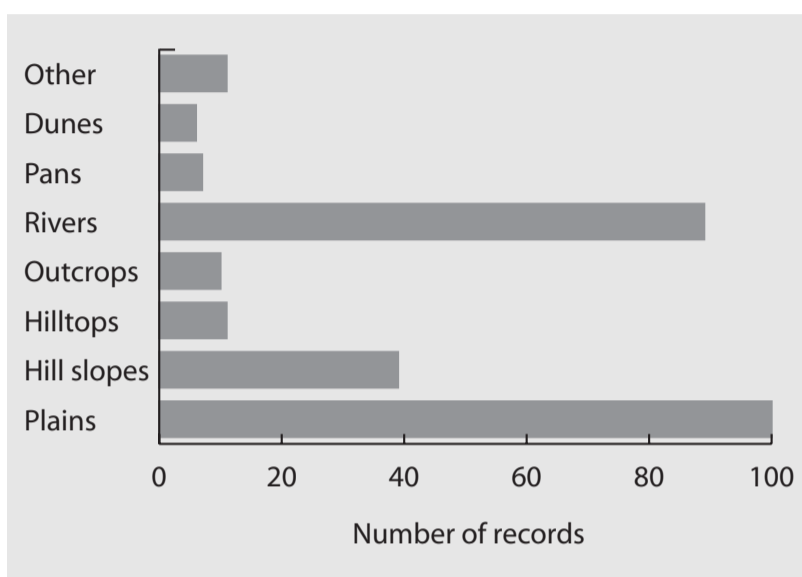


DISTRIBUTION & ABUNDANCE

Uncommon to common across most of northern Namibia, extending southwards to the western-central parts.

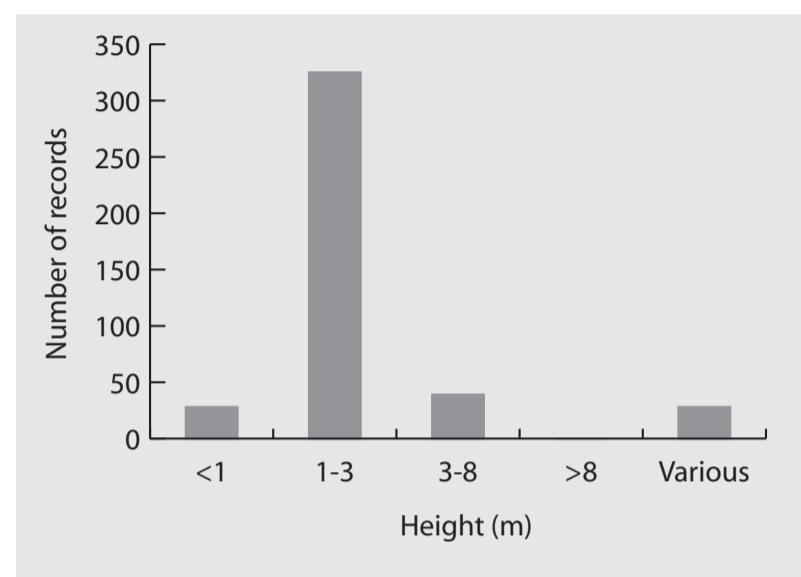
HABITAT

Various, but mainly plains in the Karstveld and north-east; hill slopes in the Karstveld and on the north-central plateau; along rivers in the central-west, north-west and north-east; and occasionally on pans in the north-east. Mostly on sand; sometimes on sand hummocks on floodplains.



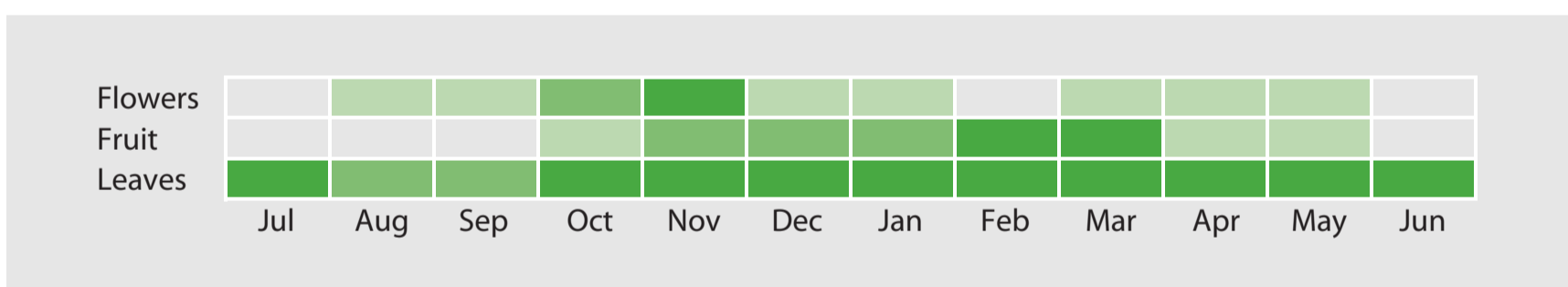
GROWTH FORM

Mostly a shrub (87% of records), generally in the 1–3-m height class, but sometimes taller. Occasionally a tree (11% of records) and sometimes climbing over a host plant (2%), which puts it into the 3–8-m class. It may form thickets in places.



ANNUAL CYCLE

FLOWERS most of the year, but never prolific; mostly October and November. FRUIT October to May. LEAVES essentially evergreen, with bare individuals in August and September.



GENERAL

A hemiparasite (depending on the roots of a host for moisture, but otherwise growing as a separate plant). The fruit of var. *microphylla* is eaten raw or brewed into an alcoholic beverage. The plant has medicinal properties and the seed oil is used cosmetically. Birds and tree squirrels eat the fruit; bees visit the flowers.

CONSERVATION CONCERNS

None recorded.

Ximenia americana var. *microphylla*, fruit and leaves, E. Ellinger

