

Adenia pechuelii

Elephant's foot / Desert kohlrabi

Family: Passifloraceae (Granadilla)



Collection Number: 63

Description: *Adenia pechuelii* is one of the most peculiar plants growing in the Namib. It has a massive, grey-green, rounded stem which may grow as immense as 1 m in diameter. Narrow, woody branches grow out of the top of the stem, giving the overall appearance of a hedgehog. On older plants these branches are very long and may cascade down the sides of the plant and over surrounding rocks. Leaves are simple, elliptical with margins entire and are arranged alternately along the stems. They have a slightly waxy surface. Tendrils may also grow along the thin branches of older plants. Elephant's foot has a small, inconspicuous yellow flower. The plant is dioecious (bears male and female flowers on separate plants).

Habitat: Members of the *Adenia* genus grow in a great variety of habitats, from tropical rain forests to the Namib desert. *A. pechuelii* is limited to the rocky areas of the semi-desert, from southern Kaokoveld as far south as NamibRand. On the nature reserve it is not common, and so well hidden away amongst rocks that smaller plants are often over-looked. It is found in the mountainous areas, where it grows in inaccessible places amongst rocks on steep slopes. This is to protect the plant from browsing animals which are attracted to the water that is stored in the plant. There are some fine specimens amongst the kloofs of the Nubib mountains on Toscaan and Draaihoek.

General information: *Adenia* is derived from *aden* meaning gland, a feature of the flowers of this species, and also present at the base of the leaves. The species is named after Eduard Pechuel-Loesche, a geographer who visited Namibia in 1884 - 85.

Protected species, endemic to Namibia.





Only 1 specimen, sent
to NBRI

NBRI - Collection Data Form

Collectors No. 63 Date 03.01.2000
Collector/s Louise Clapham GPS
Locality (please describe properly, not just grid/gps) Lower slopes of Numbi Mt, farm Grid 2416 C
Toskalan. (Quiver tree forest nr. farmhouse) Altitude ± 1150
Aspect W. Slope Mod. Exposure Partial shade Photo no's. ✓ 63
Voucher for

DESCRIPTION OF PLANT Please give as much information as possible

Species *Aderia perhuzelii*? Perennial/Annual
Habit (eg. dwarf shrub) Dwarf shrub/tree
Height up to 1.5m Occurrence (eg. common) Rare
Flower/inflorescence (colour, shape, size, smell, texture) Small, inconspicuous yellow
flower, 5 petals

Leaves (simple/compound, margin, shape, colour, texture, stipules) Simple, margin entire
elliptical. Alternate arranged. Slightly waxy surface.
Terminals also along stems

Stems and bark (colour, texture, habit - eg. erect stem with yellow peeling papery bark - presence or
absence and smell of sap or latex - eg. milky latex with unpleasant smell) Stem massive
Branches shooting from the top, long slender, pale
grey/brown colour. Longest shoots cascading down over rocks
Fruits and seed (presence/absence, shape, colour, edibility and taste if edible, single or clustered,
maturity) None present

Roots/Underground organs (shape, texture, colour, size)

Other (eg. uses, ecology)

Indigenous names and languages

| Habitat | | Substrate | Soil type | Moisture | Biotic effect |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| cliff face <i>hbr</i> | riverbank/ streambank | soil | san: ✓ <i>Quartz</i> | | road/railside |
| mountain/hill peak | seepage area | stony/rocky soil | sandy loam | well-drained ✓ | cultivated land |
| mountain/hill slope | waterfall/ rapids | gravel | loam | seasonally waterlogged | abandoned land |
| ravine/loof/✓ gorge | littoral | termite mound | humus- rich | permanently waterlogged | heavily grazed |
| talus/scree | unknown | bare rock ✓ | loamy clay | moist/damp | garden |
| dune slope | | water | clay | freestanding water | plantation |
| dune crest | Vegetation | roots | calcrete | running water | recently burnt |
| interdunal street | desert | other | black turf | mist/fog | disturbed - other |
| ridge | shrubland ✓ open/closed- | | salt/brack | | other |
| rocky outcrop | woodland open/closed | | gravel | | <i>Most specimens are virtually inaccessible</i> |
| drain | thornbush savanna | | dolomite | | |
| plateau | forest | | granite ✓ | | |
| valley | grassland | | lime | | |
| donga/ditch/gulley | karoo | | mica schist | | |
| depression/ pan | | | quartzite | | |
| dam | | | other | | |
| dry bed of river/stream | | | | | |
| floodplain | | | | | |
| estuary/lagoon | | | | | |
| marsh/swamp/ wetland | | | | | |
| river/stream | | | | | |

FOR HERBARIUM USE ONLY

Collected By..... date..... Accession.....

| lowering code | fruiting code | voucher | duplicates |
|---------------|---------------|--------------|------------|
| mature | | genebank | |
| immature | | ethnobotanic | |
| remains | | | |
| absent | | | |