

African Plants

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Taxonomy

Scientific Name **Conophytum smaleorum**
Rodgerson & A.J.Young

Higher Classification Dicotyledons

Family AIZOACEAE

National Status

Status and Criteria **Vulnerable D2**

Assessment Date 2020/02/06

Assessor(s) A.J. Young & D. Raimondo

Justification A highly localised species known from only one location from an area of under 1 km² in the Richtersveld region of South Africa. In accordance with the IUCN Red List guidelines it has an extent of occurrence (EOO) and an area of occupancy (AOO) of 4 km². With a significant increase in demand for Conophytums to supply the specialist succulent horticulture trade coming from Asian countries since March 2019 this highly localised species is now potentially threatened by illegal collection. It therefore qualifies for Vulnerable under Criterion D2.

Distribution



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Endemism	South African endemic
Provincial distribution	Northern Cape
Range	Richtersveld, near Umdaus, north of Steinkopf.

Habitat and Ecology

Major system	Terrestrial
Major habitats	Succulent Karoo
Description	Crevices in quartzitic-mica rocks and amongst rubble, occasionally in shade of small shrubs.

Threats

This species is increasingly popular in cultivation and in demand by collectors. Collection is a potential threat to the single very small and highly localised population. With a significant increase having taken place in the illegal trade of wild harvested *Conophytum* plants spurred by increased demand from Asian countries since March 2019 this is serious potential threat. Since this is a rare and recently described species, it may be targeted for its novelty value. The population however occurs in a very remote and difficult to access area and there is as yet no evidence that this species has been collected from the wild.

Population

Conophytum smaleorum was recently (2009) discovered in a very remote area of the eastern Richtersveld. At the type locality it is locally common, and the population is scattered across a hillside and hilltop. No estimate of the population size has been made, but it is likely to be more than 1000 mature individuals. The area is difficult to access, and similar habitat in surrounding areas remain relatively poorly explored. It is possible that other, still undiscovered subpopulations exist.

Population trend	Stable
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Assessment History

Taxon assessed	Status and Criteria	Citation/Red List version
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Conophytum **Critically** 2017.1
smaleorum **Rare**
Rodgerson
& A.J.Young

Bibliography

Rodgerson, C. and Young, A.J.
2013. Conophytum smaleorum: A
new Knopie from the southern
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Citation

Young, A.J. & Raimondo, D. 2020.
Conophytum smaleorum
Rodgerson & A.J.Young. National
Assessment: Red List of South
African Plants version 2020.1.
Accessed on 2021/09/27

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