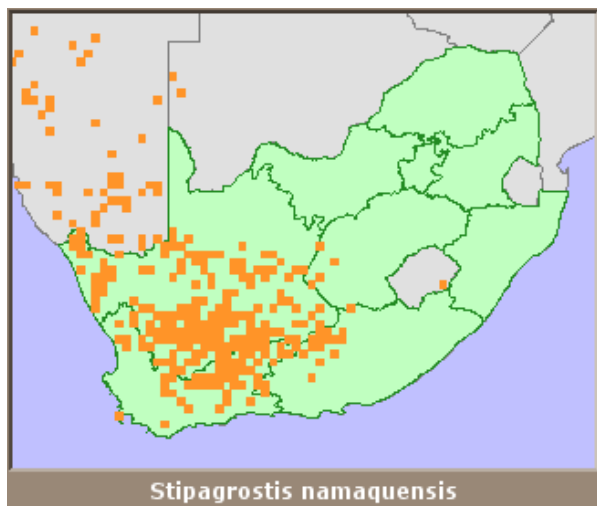


Stipagrostis namaquensis

Common name: Bushman River Grass; Steekkweek

Family: Poaceae

Habitat: Occurs in sandy soils, mostly along dry river courses. Where it stabilizes and binds sand and captures nutrients and sediments. Improving conditions for other plants to grow.



Map from <http://redlist.sanbi.org/>

Plant description: Tufted grass often forming dense tussocks with hard narrow leaves ending in needle-like tips. Grows 1 to 2 metres tall. Flowerheads with silky plumes.

Palatability: ★★ - ★★★ low to moderate. Mature leaves tough with low palatability, but new shoots utilized particularly by karakul sheep.

Seed description: Seed resembles extremely small grain of rice on feathery plume

Viable seeds per kg sickle-cut stems: 20,000-50,000

When to plant: October-March.

Recommended sowing density: 10 kg/ha

How to plant: Roughen soil with a spade or implement. In wide riverbeds tie bunches of the grass to a stick for wind dispersal. In narrow riverbeds scatter stems loosely on the ground. Cover with thorn branches to keep stems from blowing away and seedlings being grazed by livestock or game.



S. namaquensis growing in the dry Sandrivier near Prince Albert



Above: *S. namaquensis* flowerhead up close



Left: Harvested and cured flowerheads as sold by Renu-Karoo.

References:

Van Oudtshoorn, F., 2006. Guide to grasses of Southern Africa. Briza Publications. Pretoria.

Child, Matthew F., et al. "Tree-grass coexistence in a flood-disturbed, semi-arid savanna system." *Landscape ecology* 25.2 (2010): 315-326.

Renu-Karoo unpublished data