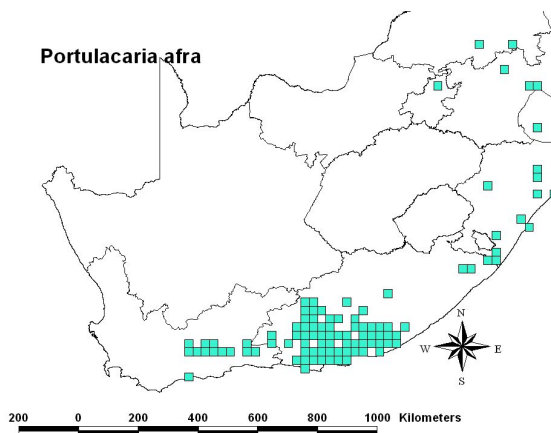


Portulacaria afra

Common name: Spekboom, olifantskos, soet-spekboom, suur-spekboom, elephant food

Family: Portulacaceae

Habitat: North-facing slopes in southern and eastern Cape in Little Karoo to Baviaanskloof and from Touwsrivier to Graaff Reinet



Map based on PRECIS data from <http://sibis.sanbi.org/>

Plant description: Multi-stemmed shrub up to 2 m high. Leaves circular, flat, succulent like coins, bright green. Flowers pink. This plant is not salt tolerant and on saline soils turns yellow and grows slowly.

Palatability: ★★★ moderate for livestock and game

Other uses: soil binding, hedging

Seed description: The fruit are small and winged and dispersed by wind and ants

Viable seeds per kg: not known

How to propagate: Best propagated from rooted cuttings or un-rooted truncheons (cuttings about 1 m high). These should be planted to a depth of one quarter to one third of their length at a time of the year when rain is expected. Watering increases growth but is not essential for establishment. Excessive watering on poorly-drained soil will cause rotting.

Distribution limits: not tolerant of frost. Does best in full sun on north-facing slopes with rainfall 200-400mm/year.



Spekboom thicket near Willowmore on left. Spekboom has been removed by overgrazing on right



Left: leaves and branches; Right: unripe seeds



Planted truncheons (cuttings)

References

PRECIS data on southern African plant distributions and taxonomy <http://sibis.sanbi.org/faces/SearchSpecies/>

Renu-Karoo unpublished data