

# Fact Sheet: HOODIA

*Hoodia gordonii*

## Common Names

**English:** Hoodia  
**Nama / San:** //hoba  
**German:** Hoodia  
**Afrikaans:** Chaap

## Introduction



▲ Photo: C. Rowe

A leafless succulent plant with multiple stems. Sharp spines occur in rows on the stems. The large pink to maroon flowers exude a strong smell of rotten meat which attracts flies that facilitate pollination. The fruit are brown horned pods on short stalks which can contain up to 200 seeds. The brown drop-shaped seeds have a tuft of silky white hair attached to their one end that acts as a parachute to aid in wind dispersal when the seed pod splits open. Among the 10 Hoodia species occurring in Namibia, *H. gordonii* is cultivated for commercial use (MCA, 2014) (NBRI, 2014).

## Traditional knowledge and use

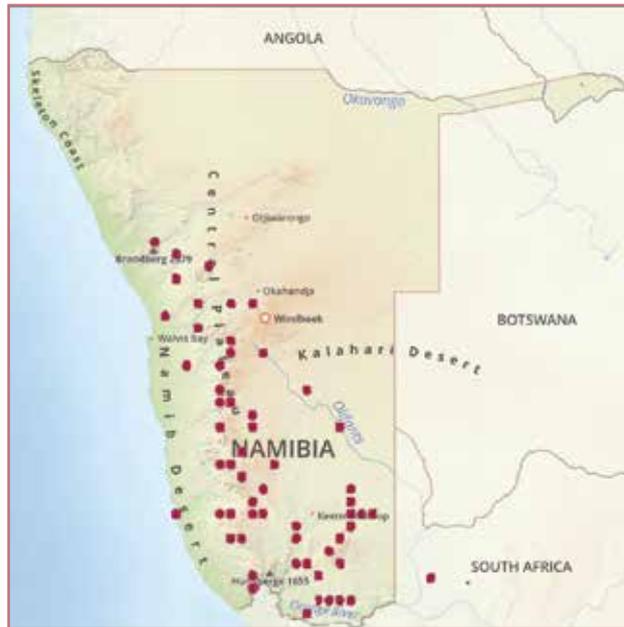
Hoodia is known as hunger and thirst quencher used by the first inhabitants of the most arid areas of southern Africa (MCA, 2014).

Powder and extracts made from dried Hoodia stems are used in skin-

conditioning cosmetic products as well as health products that promote weight loss, control diabetes and act against high blood pressure and gout.

INCI: HOODIA GORDONII EXTRACT

## Status Namibia: protected; CITES: II; near-endemic, indigenous



## Distribution

◀ (Irish, 2018)

## Cultivation and Harvesting

Since uncontrolled wild harvesting almost led to the depletion of the natural growing population in the initial stages of its product development as appetite suppressant, Hoodia was placed on CITES II in 2005 (MCA, 2014). A permit issued in the country of origin is needed to cultivate and trade Hoodia. *H. gordonii* is cultivated successfully for commercial use in the southern parts of Namibia. The succulent stems are harvested, sliced and dried for further processing.



▲ Hoodia powder (NBRI, 2014).

## REFERENCES

- Irish, J., 2018. *Namibia Biodiversity Database Website: Hoodia gordonii*. [Online] [Accessed Nov 2019].  
MCA, 2014. Hoodia (*H. gordonii*). In: *The commercialisation of indigenous natural plant products in Namibia*. Windhoek: Venture Publications.  
NBRI, 2014. <http://www.nbri.org.na/sections/economic-botany/INP/sectors/Hoodia>. [Online] [Accessed Nov 2019].



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