

Crotalaria damarensis

Rattle Bush

Family: Fabaceae
Sub-family: Papilionoideae



Collection Number: 28

Description: An erect annual herb, sometimes growing into a small shrub, with a conspicuous bright yellow flower. The flower consists of 5 petals, the two lower petals are fused together to form the keel. The larger petal is the banner, and the two remaining petals are the wings. This arrangement is typical of the family Fabaceae. The leaves are pinnately compound. The fruit is pod (legume) which is slightly elongated, and contains copious amounts of seeds. The plant is quick to germinate following good rainfall.

Habitat: *Crotalaria damarensis* is abundant and widespread through the dune belt if sufficient rain has fallen. It can form a bright yellow carpet over large areas of dunes.

General information: *Crotalaria* comes from the Greek *krotalon* meaning "rattle". It alludes to the seeds that rattle in the pod when ripe.

Stock that feeds on *Crotalaria* may suffer from a number of diseases, collectively known as "crotalism" or "crotalariosis", which can take many forms. Domestic animals can be severely affected, particularly horses. Different *Crotalaria* spp. cause different types of poisoning, with different symptoms. The poisonous substance found in *Crotalaria* spp. is a toxic pyrrolizidine alkaloid, the toxin causes damage to the liver, may affect the bronchi and lungs, and causes inflammation of hooves. *Crotalaria damarensis* does not appear to be browsed on by any game on NamibRand.



WOLWEDANS HERBARIUM (NRNR)

NAME: *Crotalaria damarensis*
Rattle bush

Collection No: 28

Date: 10/04/99

Collector: Louise Clapham

Grid ref.: 2515 Bb

Locality: Dune belt, Wolwedans. Approx 10 km S. of Dune Camp.

Habitat: Sand dunes

Plant features: Erect annual herb, bright yellow flower, 5 petals, fruit a pod (legume).