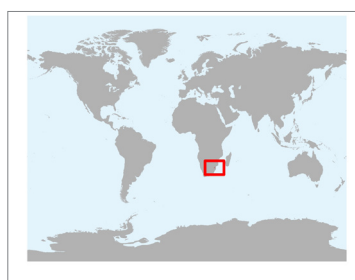




© Mervyn Lötter

NOT EVALUATED	DATA DEFICIENT	LEAST CONCERN	NEAR THREATENED	VULNERABLE	ENDANGERED	CRITICALLY ENDANGERED	EXTINCT IN THE WILD	EXTINCT
NE	DD	LC	NT	VU	EN	CR	EW	EX



Geographical range

Species of the Day: Wild Yam

The **Wild Yam**, *Dioscorea strydomiana*, is listed as 'Critically Endangered' on the Red List of South African Plants. While surveying plant material sold at a traditional medicine market, Gerhard Strydom, after whom this plant is named, came across a yam completely different from other known species. To seek out its location, traditional healers led him to a remote valley in the mountains bordering South Africa and Swaziland.

This new species, which is being described by yam experts at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, has a shrub-like growth form, with large woody tubers that grow above the ground, unlike other yams. The Wild Yam is threatened by harvesting of its tubers for traditional medicine. Annual monitoring of two small populations revealed that many tubers are cut often and repeatedly, and that this harvesting is likely to be unsustainable.

Conservation measures, implemented with the co-operation of the tribal authority on whose land the Wild Yam occurs, include control of access to the site, *ex-situ* propagation (the preservation of species outside of their natural habitat) of plants for medicinal and horticultural trade, and banking of seeds with Kew's Millennium Seed Bank Project.

www.iucnredlist.org
www.arkive.org



Species of the Day
 is sponsored by



The production of the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ is made possible through the IUCN Red List Partnership: IUCN (including the Species Survival Commission), BirdLife International, Conservation International, NatureServe and Zoological Society of London.