**Rhynchosia adenodes** Eckl. & Zeyh.

Family: Fabaceae

Common names: monyamadi (Sesotho); ungazini (isiZulu)

**Introduction**

A bright yellow-flowered, indigenous, prostrate herb, with long trailing stems; its roots are used in traditional medicine for the treatment of rheumatism, menstrual pains and dysentery.

**Description**

*Rhynchosia adenodes* is a perennial, prostrate herb, with a long, trailing stem, growing from a woody rootstock, 0.1–0.6 m long. The stems are decumbent, glabrous or pubescent. The leaves are trifoliate; leaflets terminal, ovate-orbicular, 6–40 × 5–30 mm, acute or obtuse, resinous dotted; petiole 5–35 mm long; stipules at right angles to the stem, ovate-lanceolate, 2–7 × 0.5–2.5 mm, glabrous. The inflorescence in axillary racemes or terminal clusters, 40–140 mm long, glabrous or pubescent. The flowers are 7–14 mm long, yellow with orange or maroon-purple venation on petals, glabrous or glandular pubescent. The fruit is a small pod, 15–18 × 4–6 mm, glabrous or glandular pubescent.

Flowering time is in spring, summer and autumn (September–June).
Conservation Status

Status

According to the Red List of South African plants, Rhynchosia adenodes is assessed as Least Concern (LC), as evaluated against the five IUCN criteria.

Distribution and habitat

Distribution description

*Rhynchosia adenodes* has a restricted distribution in southern Africa. In South Africa, it occurs in Limpopo, North West, Gauteng, Mpumalanga, Free State, KwaZulu-Natal and the Northern, Western and Eastern Cape. It is also found in Lesotho. It grows in grassland, forest, among rocks, on hillsides.

Derivation of name and historical aspects

History
The name *Rhynchosia* is derived from the Greek word, *rhynchos*, meaning ‘a beak’, 'snout’ or ‘horn’, referring to the keel of the flowers. The specific name *adenodes*, means ‘with glandular knots’.

**Ecology**

*Rhynchosia adenodes* is browsed by stock.

**Uses**

*Rhynchosia adenodes* is an important medicinal plant in traditional healing in southern Africa, especially for the Basotho, Swazis and Zulu people. A decoction of the plant is used to treat rheumatism and menstrual pains. It is also used in veterinary medicine: crushed roots and stems is given to calves for dysentery.

**Growing Rhynchosia adenodes**

In its natural habitat, *Rhynchosia adenodes* is a fairly fast grower. There is no evidence of this species being cultivated in gardens. Users of this plant usually harvest it from the wild.

**References**

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National Herbarium, Pretoria
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