

# BIO-HAZARD

## *Harrisia martinii*

*Harrisia martinii* (moon cactus or toukaktus), originating from South America (Argentina), was probably introduced into South Africa as an ornamental plant. It has now become a widespread problem, especially in savanna areas. Within the KNP *Harrisia martinii* has been found along the Crocodile River, just upstream of the old Komatipoort sewerage works.

### Identification

**Description:** Spiny succulent shrub, 1 to 3 meters high, with long, clambering multi-branched stems. Stems often arching downwards and rooting where touching the ground. Cladodes bright green, cylindrical, ribbed resembling plaited rope.

**Leaves:** none.

**Flowers:** White, nocturnal. Flowers mainly from November to January.

**Fruits:** Bright pinkish red succulent berries, with small black seeds inside.



Figure 2: *Harrisia martinii* rambling over indigenous vegetation

### Damage

*Harrisia martinii* can be found sprawling over and smothering indigenous vegetation.

### Control

Effective biological control agents are available, as well as registered herbicides.

### Contact address

Please report any sightings of *Harrisia martinii* in and adjacent to the Kruger National Park to:

Alien Biota Section

Private Bag X402

Skukuza

1350

Tel: (013) 735 4114 Fax: (013) 735 4055

E-mail: [aliens@parks-sa.co.za](mailto:aliens@parks-sa.co.za)



Figure 1: Plant & Fruit

