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Some Medicinal Flora of Okomu Forest Reserve in Southern Nigeria

M. Idu and O.O. Osemwegie

Department of Botany, University of Benin, PMB 1154, Benin City, Nigeria

Abstract: A survey of useful medicinal plants of Okomu Forest Reserve was undertaken and a total of 60 species of plants comprising of 50 leafy plants and 10 mushrooms were identified and recognized to be useful in native health care services by inhabitants of various communities in the South-South of Nigeria. Different southern Nigerian communities show not only individual characteristic dialect, culture and therapeutic practices involving the application of ethnomedicinal plants but also share common indigenous folk knowledge of what plant is used for the treatment of which ailment. Studies also show that 75% of men in most rural communities visited have inherited ethnobotanical knowledge from their fathers.

Key words: Medicinal flora, Okomu forest, Nigeria

Introduction

The southern part of Nigeria is long recognized for his low land rainforest vegetations which are very rich in botanical diversity (Hepper and Keay, 2000; Jones, 1956). Ethnic diversity around and within the vast forest regions i.e., rain, mangrove forests, of Southern Nigeria reflects an untapped wealth of indigenous uses of medicinal plants for the treatment of various health problems (Counteix, 1961; Gill, 1992). The reliance on traditional health care by many developing countries off Africa is dwindling because of the growing influx of orthodox medical practice into our rural settlements (Rao, 1996; Hounfordji, 2001). This has negatively imparted on indigenous traditional heritage and knowledge of ethnobotanic plants (herbs, shrubs, trees, ferns, bryophytes and mushrooms). It has also reduced practices involving mythical and medicinal uses of plant flora (Kshirsagar and Singh, 2000; Osemeobo, 1992). The traditional culture worldwide are more or less endangered as a result of increasing legislative and moral (psychological) supports accorded orthodox practice over native medicine. There is therefore a need for more studies and documentation of our indigenous traditional heritage and knowledge holdings of medicinal flora by various tribals, especially of mushrooms (Oso, 1977; Harkonen *et al.*, 1994).

This study aims at documenting mythical and ethnobotanical knowledge and flora abound in the Okomu Forest Reserve of Edo state, south-south of Nigeria.

Materials and Methods

Several field trips were made by members of the ethnomedicine unit, Department of Botany University of Benin between the month of April 2002 to December 2003 to the forest. Some of the plants species were identified *in situ* or collected (herbarium specimens). Further information about Okomu forest, the plants were gathered from local inhabitants spread across different communities and culture not more than 800 km radius of the forest who had good knowledge of the plants in their locality. Locals not less than 45 years of age are some time taken on some of the trips to help supply local names and identify medicinally useful plants. Interestingly, we noticed that among the

informants from the different communities studied, the adult males were comparatively better familiar with the plants of ethnobotanical values than the adult females. The reason for this may be traced to the cultural recognition and preference for male child.

Table 1: Some medicinal plants of Okomu Forest Reserve, scientific and local (Bini) names and uses

Family	Scientific name	Local name	Medicinal uses
Amaranthaceae	<i>Achyranthes aspera</i> L.	Unknown	Asthma, cough, cholera, malaria, laxative
	<i>Amaranthus spinosus</i> Linn.	Unknown	Acute Abdominal pain, Irregular menstrual cycle, anti-rheumatic, diuretic.
Acanthaceae	<i>Celosia laxa</i> Schum and Thonn	Ebafo	Antipyretic, jaundice.
	<i>Asystasia gangetica</i> (L.) T. Anders	Unknown	Antipruritic, astringent, vermifuge
	<i>Cyathula prostrata</i> (L) Blume	Unknown	Dysentery, scabies, wounds and burns
Agavaceae	<i>Dracaena manii</i> Bak.	U di- elimi	Abdominal pain
Ancardiaceae	<i>Enantia chlorantha</i> Oliv.	Erenbavbago	Hepatitis, malaria, jaundice
	<i>Lansea welwitschii</i> (Hiern) Engl.	Ewinwan	Sprain, astringents, rheumatism
Annonaceae	<i>Monodora myristica</i> (Gaertn.) Dunal	Ukpoisa	Constipation, stimulant, headache, guinea worm
	<i>Spondias mombin</i> Linn.	Ogheghe	Yaws, cough, diuretic, conjunctivitis.
	<i>Xylopia aethiopicum</i> (Dunal) A. Rich	Unien	Stomach aches, carminative, neuralgia, laxative
Apocynaceae	<i>Alstonia congensis</i> Engl.	Ukhu	Antipyretic, antiperiodic febrifuge
	<i>Funumia elastica</i> (Preuss.) Stapf.	Anyan	Nose bleeding, piles, impotency, jaundice
	<i>Rauvolfia vomitoria</i> Afzel	Akata	Stomachic, tooth aches, diarrhoea, jaundice
Areaceae	<i>Elaeis guineensis</i> Jacq.	U din	Ringworm, diarrhoea
Asteraceae	<i>Ageratum conyzoides</i> L.	Unknown	Diarrhoea, labour, malaria
	<i>Aspilla africana</i> (Perr.) C.D. Adam	Unknown	Dysentery, wound, fibril headache
	<i>Chromolaena odorata</i> (L.) R.M. King and Robinson	Awolowo	Fresh wounds, indigestion/stomach upsets
	<i>Vernonia verbacifolia</i> Less	Ohiwo-eni	Antipyretic, antidiuretic, emetic
Caesalpiniaceae	<i>Azelia africana</i> Sm.	Odo	Febrifuge, anti-emetic, stomach disorder, hernia
Combretaceae	<i>Combretum platypterum</i> (Welw) Hutch and Dalz.	Unknown	Eye problem, pile
	<i>Terminalia ivorensis</i> A. Chev.	Eghoin-nobia	Pile
Conmaraceae	<i>Cnestis feruginea</i> DC.	Ukpe-ibieka	Tooth abrasive
Convolvulaceae	<i>Ipomoea onvoluerate</i> P.Beauv.	Unknown	Laxative, ulcer, carminative inflammation
Crassulaceae	<i>Bryophyllum pinnatum</i> Kurz.	Idan-wesin	Boils, antiseptic dysuria
Cucurbitaceae	<i>Momordica charantia</i> L.	Ebe-Isiugwu	Dysentery, diabetes, piles, jaundice, antihelminthic
Cyperaceae	<i>Cyperus difformis</i> Linn	Unknown	Astringent, diaphoretic stomachic, contraceptive
Dioscoreaceae	<i>Dioscorea praehensilis</i> (Kunth) Pax	Akhuala	Aphrodisiac and Boil
Euphorbiaceae	<i>Acalypha chiliata</i> Burm. f.	Unknown	Constipation, emetic rheumatism, skin disease.
	<i>Phyllanthus amarus</i> Schum ex Thom	Oruru-	Hair conditioner, blood purifier
		Ivbiahianmher	
Fabaceae	<i>Acacia ataxacantha</i> DC.	Okkhuenkhuen	Eczema, astringent, indigestion, leaf petiole as chewing stick
	<i>Albizia lebeck</i> (L.) Benth	Uwowe-nalaghobo	Diarrhea, dysentery, constipation, purities.
	<i>Albizia adianthifolia</i> (Schum) W.F. Wight	Uwowe-nolagheba	Anthelmintic, carminative purgative, cold, coughs
	<i>Albizia ferruginea</i> (Guill and Perr.) Benth	Unknown	Constipation, dysentery, dressing wound.
	<i>Mucuna pruriens</i> (L.) DC.	Unknown	Aphrodisiac, stimulant, vigour diuretic, purgative
Irvingiaceae	<i>Irvingia gabonense</i> (Aubry-Lecomte ex O'Rorke) Baill	Ogui	Intestinal worm
Lamiaceae	<i>Cimicum gratissimum</i> Linn	Ebe-alumokho	Ejaculation, rheumatism
Malvaceae	<i>Urena lobata</i> L.	Unknown	Snakebite, dental care arthritis stomatitis
Myristicaceae	<i>Ficus asperifolia</i> Miq.	Obadan	Boil, Epididymitis Adenopathy
	<i>Ficu exasperate</i> Vahl.	Amenmen	Laxative, boil
	<i>Melicia exelsa</i> (Welw) Benth	Uloko	Boil
Leguminosae	<i>Desmondium adscendens</i> (Sw.) DC	Ebe-izawe	Fever(antipyretic), Analgesic
Passifloraceae	<i>Garcinia kola</i> Heckel	Eduin	Whooping cough (antitussive)
Piperaceae	<i>Piper guineensis</i> Schum and Thonn.	Oziza	Stimulant, asthma, sore throat, cold, haemorrhoid, febrifuge
Solanaceae	<i>Solanum torvum</i> Sw.	Orhiwo-azen	Stomachic, expectorant
Tiliaceae	<i>Grewia coriacea</i> Mast	Uwen-riotegbo	Gonorrhoea.
Violaceae	<i>Clerodendron volubile</i> P. Beauv.	Unknown	Dysentery

Table 1: Continued

Family	Scientific name	Local name	Medicinal uses
Zingiberaceae	<i>Tectonia grandis</i> L.	Unknown	Diuretic
	<i>Vitex rivularis</i> Guerke	Ububan	Hen-lice, cough
	<i>Aframomum sceptrum</i>	Oziema	Verifuge, stimulant
Mushrooms			
Amanitaceae	<i>Amanita phalloides</i> (Vaill. ex. Fr.) Scretan	Itu	Mythical use, conjunctivitis, oral thrush, mouth sore, High blood pressure.
Auriculariaceae	<i>Auricularia auricula</i>	Itu	Hemorrhoid, hemoptysis
	<i>Daldinia concentrica</i> (Bolton ex. Grev.) Ces. And De Not.)	Unknown	Stomactic
Ganodermataceae	<i>Ganoderma lucidum</i> (Leys.) P. Karst	Unknown	Arthritis, tonic, neoplasia.
	<i>Ganoderma resinaceum</i> Boud	Unknown	Hyperglycemia hepatopathy
	<i>Ganoderma applanatum</i> (Pers.) Pat.	Unknown	Anti-aging, hyperglycemia hypertension
Agaricaceae	<i>Pleurotus squarulosus</i>	Ikpe-kpewu	Mumps, heart disease, tonic
	<i>Pleurotus tuberregium</i> (Fr.) Singer	Ikpe-kpewu	Jaundice, indigestion
Schizophyllaceae	<i>Schizophyllum commune</i>	Unknown	Diabetes Healthfood
Plutaceae	<i>Volvariella volvaceae</i> (Fr.) singer	Unknown	Antibiotic, neoplasia

Some of the plant specimens collected were supervised by the authorities of the forest reserve and remanded at the Okomu herbarium after proper identification. Enumeration of these medicinal plants is given in Table 1 in alphabetical order of family and genus.

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