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**SOME COMMON AFRICAN HERBAL REMEDIES FOR SKIN DISEASES,
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

Kenya like many other African countries, has a long history of traditional medicine which has been practised for many years and continue to play a major role in our primary health care.

Before the arrival of the European missionaries and explorers with their modern medicine, our ancestors continued to live in this country, and naturally they would fall sick or get injured at certain times.

There is no doubt that the largest human organ and the most susceptible to both diseases and physical attacks is the skin. I am therefore, going to discuss in this paper those indigenous drug plants used by Kenyans for the treatment of different skin diseases.

Since not all skin diseases mentioned would always respond positively to traditional plant therapy, I am applying the term treatment in a broader context and avoiding the time curing.

A disease such as Leprosy is even known to the herbalists as a difficult one to cure, however, the various plants listed under it are the ones which have been tried for treating it.

INTRODUCTION

The skin is the membranous covering of the body which can be summarised into one medical term, cutis. Starting from without moving inwards, the skin has the following layers:- horny layer (stratum corneum), clear layer (stratum lucidum), granular (stratum germinativum) and basal-cell layer (stratum basale), the last two layers being referred to as the germinative zone. All these layers collectively form what is known as the epidermis. The skin is the largest organ of the body, and apart from being the protective cover of the body surface, it also acts as a regulator of body temperature, controls excessive loss of water as well as organic and inorganic materials, and synthesizes several important substances used in the body. The outer cells of the skin are constantly being shed. But below the epidermis is a tough, flexible and elastic layer called the dermis which contains many blood vessels and is thicker than the epidermis. They are a variety of pigments in the skin, while skin colour is largely due to the presence of melanin and carotene. Melanin is a yellow to black pigment located in the basal epidermal layer found in all epidermal layers in all Kenyan of African origin. Exposure to ultraviolet radiation increases the amount and darkens the colour of melanin, thus leading to tanning and protection against radiation. Carotene, a yellow orange pigment is found in the fatty areas of the dermis and outer epidermal layer in Kenyans of Asian origin.

There are many kinds of diseases affecting the skin and some of the related terms are:- skin bleeding (dermatorrhagia) blistering (epispastic, vesigatory), deficiency of pigment (albinism, albinism, leucopathia), disease (dermatosis, dermatopathy), dryness (xeroderma), inflammation (dermatitis, dermatitis), pain (dermalgia, dermatalgia) and many others.

In modern medicine, the science of skin diseases is called dermatology or dermatopathology, while any relations to it is dermal or cutaneous or integumentary. Following closely the classification of skin diseases outlined in chapter 10 of the "Medicinal Plants of East Africa" (1976)-, we will now look at specific diseases and include some recent information. I have gathered in this field.

Wound caused by snake bite and ectoparasitic diseases are not however, included in this discussion. The vernacular names following each scientific name are from the tribes who supplied the information about the plant

There are four major groups of skin diseases to be covered in a tabular form as follows:

Section A: Wounds (including sores and ulcers),

Section B: Dermatitis, itches and rashes,

Section C: Leprosy

Section D: Ringworm.

Each section has a brief description of the disease concerned, and is followed by a table giving the botanical and local names of the plant used, part of the plant used, the preparation of the plant drug and how it is dispensed.

SECTION A.

WOUNDS (INCLUDING SORES & ULCERS)

A wound is a breach in the continuity of body tissue, and is usually accompanied with bleeding due to the rupture of blood vessels. Most plants used in traditional medicine against wounds are of certain balsams and resins to stop bleeding and to help the wound heal. The other plants used for this purpose have astringent (binding) properties possibly due to the presence of such compounds like tannin. Both wounds and bleeding are common body problems, and have a wide range of plant remedies. The list being too long, I have decided to cover mainly the dicotyledons used in this purpose.

Table I : Wounds herbal remedies

BOTANICAL NAME	NATIVE/TRADE NAME	PLANT PART USED	PREPARATION/COMMENT
Acanthaceae			
<i>Justicia striata</i> (Klotzsch) Bullock	kikalamion (Mar)	whole plant	Crushed and juice used or burnt and ash applied.
Apocynaceae			
<i>Tabernaemontana holstii</i> K.Schum.	kibombo (Digo)	latex	Latex from leaves or stems applied directly onto the wound.
<i>Tabernaemontana usambarensis</i> K.Schum. ex Engl.	kitondo (Luhya)	latex	Latex from leaves or stems applied directly onto the wound.
" "	kawala (Kamba)	sap	Sap from crushed stems used
Asclepiadaceae			
<i>Periploca linearifolia</i> Quart.-Dill. & A.Rich. ex A.Rich.	sinidet (Mar)	latex	Latex from crushed stem. contain glucoside periplocin
<i>Stapelia semota</i> N.E.Br.	kawala (Kamba)	sap	Whole plant crushed and the sap used.
Asteraceae			
<i>Ageratum conyzoides</i> L.	lusa (Luhya), kundambara (Swa), oluoro-Chieng (Luo)	leaves	Crushed and soaked in water or pounded and applied direct. Very popular with the Luo as a haemostatic.
<i>Aspilia mossambicensis</i> (Oliv.) Wild	lilelie (Luhya), mutanzi (Digo), muti (Kamba), raywetigo (Luo)	leaves	Pounded and applied.
<i>Aspilia pluriseta</i> Schweinf.	muti (Embu, Kamba), ol~oiyabase (Mas)	leaves	Pounded and applied.
<i>Crassocephalum crepidioides</i> (Benth.) S.Moore	lifululwa (Luhya)	leaves	Pounded and juice squeezed on to the wound.
<i>Galinsoga parviflora</i> Cav.	jepkondewa (Mar)	stem and leaves	Pounded and juice squeezed on to the wound.
<i>Gutenbergia fischeri</i> R.E.Fr	ol-makirikirieny (Mas)	leaves	Crushed and applied.
<i>Gynura valeriana</i> Oliv	imbuni (Luhya)	leaves and flowers	Powder from leaves or flowers applied.
<i>Notonia</i> sp.	ini-la-ng'ombe (Pigo)	leaves	Pounded and juice applied
<i>Senecio lyratipartitus</i> Sch.Bip. ex A.Rich.	rwinkithia (Meru)	roots	Dried, pounded and the powder applied
<i>Vernonia aemulans</i> Vatke	fuka (Digo)	leaves	Dried and burnt and the ash rubbed on fresh wounds. Digo women use this to cure fresh cuts made on their abdomen as decoration. Vernonia have alkaloids.
<i>Vernonia karaguensis</i> Oliv.	muya (Luo), navimuli (Luhya)	leaves	Boiled and the decoction used for washing the wound.
<i>Vernonia lasiopus</i> O.Hoffm.	muatha (Meru), muhasha (Swa), muvatha (Kamba)	leaves	Pounded and the paste put on the wound. Crushed and applied
<i>Vernonia wakefieldii</i> Oliv.	kiluma-ng'ondi (Taita)	bark	Crushed and applied.

Bignoniaceae			
<i>Kigelia africana</i> (Lam.) Benth.	masina, mvongonia, (Taita), muratina (Kik), rotio (Mar), yago (Luo)	fruit	Juice from crushed fruit. Contain tannin.
<i>Stereospermum kunthianum</i> Cham.	maholu (Luhya)	leaves	Infusion of crushed leaves.
Boraginaceae			
<i>Ehretia cymosa</i> Thonn.	murembu (Meru), shekutu (Luhya)	leaves	Infusion of crushed leaves.
<i>Trichodesma zeylanicum</i> (Burm.f.) R.Br.	nyalak-dede (Luo)	leaves	Infusion of crushed leaves.
Burseraceae			
<i>Commiphora africana</i> (A.Rich.) Engl.	mbambara (Swa), mutungu (Kamba), tola (Giriama)	roots	Gum resin form.
Caparaceae			
<i>Cadaba farinosa</i> Forssk.	eren (Tur), mvunya-vumo (Swa)	leaves	Pounded dry leaves used.
<i>Capparis cartilaginea</i> Decne	chepteretwa (Mar)	roots	Juice from crushed roots. Contain sulphur oil.
<i>Maerua triphylla</i> (Thunb.) T.Durand & Schinz	chokotwa (Pokot), lito (Dor), ol-oiresoi (Mas), mulingula (Kamba), mlalam-buzi (Swa)	roots	Root infusion used.
Combretaceae			
<i>Combretum molle</i> R.Br.	eguyen (Tur), kembel (Seb) , keyo-(Luo) , kiama (Kamba), mwama (Tai), ol-mororoi (Masai)	leaves	Used in place of cotton to cover the drug before finally using the dry banana pseudostem as a bandage.
Crassulaceae			
<i>Kalanchoe densiflora</i> Rolfe	kuserwet (Kips) , kavilambodza (Gir)	leaves	The succulent leaves are are heated and the juice squeezed onto the wound.
Euphorbiaceae			
<i>Acalypha racemosa</i> Baill.	mwadzaj i (Digo)	leaves	Burnt and ash used.
<i>Acalypha villicaulis</i> Hochst. ex A.Rich	mbagiria (Gusii)	leaves	Soaked or boiled and the infusion used for washing the wound.
<i>Croton macrostachyus</i> Hochst. ex Delile	musutsu (Luhya), mutundu (Kamba, Kik), mutundu (Meru)	leaves	Crushed, soaked in water and the juice used.
<i>Euphorbia grantii</i> Oliv.	muthuri (Meru)	branches, stem	Latex applied onto the wound to stop bleeding and as a cure.
<i>Euphorbia hirta</i> L.	muziyaziya (Digo), mwache (Swa)	branches, leaves	The wound is covered with fresh leaves.
<i>Euphorbia inaequilatera</i> Sond.	lokile (Tur)	branches, stem	Powder from dried and pounded parts used.
<i>Jatropha curcas</i> L.	mbogo-komo (Gir)	latex	Fresh latex from leaves or stem used.
<i>Jatropha nogalensis</i> Chiov.	jilba-dig (Som)	latex	Fresh latex from leaves or stem used.
<i>Ricinus communis</i> L.	castor oil plant (Trade), libono (Luhya), mbono (Swa), mbonu, (Taita), odagwa (Luo)	leaves.	Young leaves crushed and applied onto the wound

<i>Synadenium grantii</i> Hook. f.	fangafa, ofangafa (Luo)	latex	Fresh latex from leaves and stems applied on fresh decoration marks cut on the surface of women's abdomen. The healing is accomplished with little swelling which is the decoration.
Fabaceae			
<i>Acacia polyacantha</i> Willd.	falcon's claw acacia (Trade), mkengewa (Bajun, Swa)	leaves.	Dried, pounded, mixed some oil and applied.
<i>Cassia singueana</i> Del.	muhumbu (Gir), mukengaka (Kamba), sisilamosa (Luhya)	roots	Crushed soaked in water and infusion used for washing the wound.
<i>Dalbergia melanoxylon</i> Guill. & Perr.	mwengo (Meru)	bark	Decoction used for cleaning wounds.
<i>Dichrostachys cinerea</i> (L.) Wight & Arn.	dunguu (Taita), etirai (Tur), jirime (Bor), mkingiri (Swa), msativu (Boni), mundua (Kamba), okiro (Luo)	bark	Pounded and applied
<i>Erythrina abyssinica</i> Lam.	mjafari (Swa), gorggorwa (Mar), murembe (Luhya, Luo), Muuti (Meru)	bark	Burnt and ash used.
<i>Indigofera arrecta</i> Hochst.ex A. Rich.	sarkelat (Mar)	leaves.	Crushed and juice used
<i>Leucaena leucocephala</i> (Lam.) de Wit	munyaa (Digo)	roots	Burnt and the ash called "Kago" (Digo) rubbed onto cuts.
Hymenocardiaceae.			
<i>Hymenocardia acida</i> Tul	okang'o (Luo)	bark	Dried and pounded into powdery form.
Lamiaceae			
<i>Hoslundia opposita</i> Vahl	mdahamwita (Swa), mutserere (Digo, Gir), ofwong'o (Luo), omufwofwo or shikuma (Luhya)	leaves.	Crushed, soaked in water and applied
<i>Plectranthus sylvestris</i> Gürke	muoro (Meru), nginga (Taita)	leaves.	Crushed and the juice squeezed onto the wound.
<i>Satureja abyssinica</i> (Benth.) Briq.	kamungala (Kamba)	whole plant	Decoction used for bathing by circumcised boys.
Lauraceae			
<i>Ocotea usambarensis</i> Engl.	kivumba, manyolo (Taita), E. African camphorwood (Trade), muura (Meru), muzaiti (Kik)	bark	Pounded and the powder used for dressing wounds.
Malvaceae			
<i>Abutilon fruticosum</i> Guill. & Perr.	bolambal (Som)	roots	Dried and pounded or burnt and ash applied.
<i>Sida ovata</i> Forssk.	uvyao (Kamba)	bark	Dried, pounded and applied.
Menispermaceae			
<i>Cissampelos pareira</i> L.T	libugu (Digo)	roots and leaves	Burnt and the ash applied.
Monimiaceae			
<i>Xymalos monospora</i> (Harv.) Baill.	mwawusungu (Taita)	leaves. roots	Dried and pounded into a powdery form applied.
Ochnaceae			
<i>Brackenridgea zanguebarica</i> Oliv.	mchonga mahana (Digo)	roots	Dried and pounded into a powder (yellow).

<i>Ochna mossambicensis</i> Klotzsch	muchu. mpamapama (Digo)	bark	Crushed and the paste applied
Oleaceae			
<i>Olea hochstetteri</i> Baker	elgon Olive (Trade), musharagi (Kik), murguiwet (Nan), Ol-loliondo (Mas)	bark	Burnt and the ash applied.
Pedaliaceae			
<i>Josephinia africana</i> Vatke	comudu (Boni)	roots	Pounded into powdery form, mixed with sheep's fat and used for dressing the wound.
Polygalaceae			
<i>Securidaca</i> <i>longipedunculata</i> Fres.	mzigi (Digo, Swa)	roots	Dried and pounded.
Polygonaceae			
<i>Rumex abyssinicus</i> Jacq.	kinyonywe (Kamba)	roots	Dried and pounded
Rubiaceae			
<i>Heinsia crinita</i> (Afzel.) G.Taylor	mvunja-jembe (Digo)	leaves	Burnt and ash used.
Salvadoraceae			
<i>Salvadora persica</i> L.	ethokoni (Tur), kizungumoto (Taita), mueza-moyo (Digo), oremit (Mas)	bark	Crushed and juice used.
Scrophulariaceae			
<i>Rhamphicarpa</i> <i>herzfeldiana</i> Vatke	chepneskut (Kips), esegielop (Mas)	leaves	Crushed or pounded and juice squeezed on bleeding wound to stop bleeding.
Simaroubaceae			
<i>Brucea antidysenterica</i> J.F. Mill.	kingame (Kamba)	leaves	Pounded and mixed with ghee.
Solanaceae			
<i>Solanum incanum</i> L.	sodom apple (Trade), mtunguja (Swa) & many vernacular names	fruits	For fresh wound, break the fruit and apply the juice. Contain alkaloid solanine, and is believed to be antibacterial.
<i>Solanum nigrum</i> L.	ndulu (Kamba), osuga (Luo)	leaves	Pounded, soaked in water and the infusion used.
<i>Withania somnifera</i> (L.) Dun.	kipkogai (Mar), muanzo (Kamba)	leaves	Burnt and the ash used, contain alkaloids.
Tiliaceae			
<i>Grewia occidentalis</i> L.f.	aroya (Luo), chomisiat (Por), ekeli (Tur), mutuva (Kamba), ol-neligwe (Mas)	bark	As above. Both species contain tannin mucilage.
<i>Triumfetta rhomboidea</i> Jacq.	lohandi (Luhya), miungu- moto (Digo), tumone (Boni)	roots	Crushed and juice squeezed onto the circumcision wound.
Verbenaceae			
<i>Lippia javanica</i> (Burm.f.) Spreng.	ang'we-rao (Luo), murithi (Kamba), ol-sinoi (Mas), sulasula (Luhya)	leaves	Pounded and applied.
Vitaceae			
<i>Cissus quadrangularis</i> L. <i>Rhoicissus revoilii</i> Planch.	macheso (Digo) mtambaa-dume (Swa)	stem stem, roots	The fibre from the stem used. Dried, pounded and powdery form used; or crushed onto the wound.
<i>Rhoicissus tridentata</i> (L.f.) Wild & Drummond	durutua (Luhya)	Stem	Crushed and the juice squeezed onto the wound.

SECTION B.

DERMATITIS, ITCHES AND RASHES

Dermatitis is broadly the inflammation of the skin, but strictly speaking, they can be of many types. Itch is a common symptom of many skin conditions, and refers to a peculiar irritating sensation in the skin. Rash is a lay term used for any skin eruption, but more commonly for acute inflammatory dermatoses. Rash and dermatitis due to allergic or other causes are frequently treated with antihistamines which suppress histamin release. We also know that most antihistamines also relieve pruritus (itching). I have also found that a traditional remedy for itches are similarly used for rashes and other kinds of dermatitis. Drugs for traditional treatment of these diseases are often mixed with some oil or fat, notably ghee. This gives it both anti-inflammatory and cooling effects

Table II : Dermatitis, itches and rashes herbal remedies

BOTANICAL NAME	NATIVE/TRADE NAME	PLANT PART USED	PREPARATION/COMMENT
Acanthaceae <i>Crabbea velutina</i> S. Moore	jumao (Som), ki tabchep tarbus (Mar)	whole plant	Dried, pounded and mixed with some oil
Amaranthaceae <i>Psilotrichum scleranthum</i> Thwaites	chibiriti, mkibiri ti (Digo)	leaves	Dried, pounded and mixed with some oil
Asclepiadaceae <i>Pergularia daemia</i> (Forssk.) Chiov.	kipche (Mar)	leaves	Crushed and juice applied
Asteraceae <i>Aspilia pluriseta</i> Schweinf. <i>Crassocephalum mannii</i> (Hook.f.) Milne-Redh. <i>Sphaeranthus kirkii</i> Oliv. & Hiern	muti (Kamba), ol-oiyobasa (Mas) tergekwa (Mar) chipepo, mupepo (Digo), (Digo) , kivumbani (Swa)	leaves leaves whole plant	Pounded and the paste rubbed on the infected part. Decoction used for washing the body. Decoction used for washing the body.
Bignoniaceae <i>Spathodea campanulata</i> P. Beauv.	flame of the forest, nandi flame (Trade) and many local names	bark	Decoction used for bathing babies with rashes.
Euphorbiaceae <i>Croton macrostachyus</i> Hochst. ex Del.	musutsu (Luhya), mutundu (Kamba, Kik), mutundu (Meru)	bark & roots	Decoction used for bathing babies with rashes.
Fabaceae <i>Acacia brevispica</i> Harms <i>Albizia gummifera</i> (J.F.Gmel.) C.A.Sm. <i>Erythrina abyssinica</i> Lam.	kiptare (Mar) mughobari (Luhya), ol-girigiri mughonzulu (Luhya), seet (Kips, Mar) kivuti (Kamba), mjafari (Swa) , murembe (Luhya, Luo), ol-goroshe (Mas)	roots roots bark	Decoction for bathing. Contain mucilage and tannin Pounded roots soaked in water for bathing. Contain kosotoxin. Burnt and ash used.
Lamiaceae <i>Ajuga remota</i> Benth.	chebonyirar (Mar) mataliha (Luhya)	leaves	Pounded and juice rubbed on the infected part.
Meliaceae <i>Ekebergia rueppelliana</i> (Fresen.) A.Rich.	kerbut (Mar)	bark	Decoction used for bathing. Contain tannin.

Myricaceae <i>Myrica salicifolia</i> Hochst. ex A. Rich.	kitaloswa (Mar)	leaves	pounded, mixed with ghee and rubbed on the infection.
Myrsinaceae <i>Maesa lanceolata</i> Forssk.	kalatera (Luo) lisebesebe (Luhya), Mborio (Mar)	bark	Decoction used for washing the infection. Con tain the glucocide embelic acid.
Oleaceae <i>Olea africana</i> Miller	wild olive (Trade), mutamaiyu (Kik), tamiyai (Samb), ol-orien (Mas), yemit (Tugen, Mar, Sebei)	bark	Decoction used for bathing and some drunk.
Podocarpaceae <i>Podocarpus falcatus</i> (Thunb.) R. Br. ex Mirbel	podo (Trade), benet tugen, elgy, (Mar), musengera (Kik)	bark	Decoction used for bathing and some drunk.
Polygalaceae <i>Polygala erioptera</i> DC.	agwonyo (Luo)	whole plant	Crushed, mixed with ghee and rubbed on the rashes.
Polygonaceae <i>Polygonum salicifolium</i> Brouss. ex Willd.	burika (Luhya)	leaves	Crushed, mixed with a little water and rubbed on the infection.
Proteaceae <i>Faurea saligna</i> Harv	mosambonet (Nan), bwonget (Elgeyo), sirirte (Mar)	bark	Decoction used for bathing, and some drunk.
Rubiaceae <i>Spermacoce princae</i> (K. Schum.) Verdc.	gakungathe (Kik), murkugwet (Kips), omotakiebo (Gusii)	whole plant	Pounded, mixed with ghee and rubbed on the infection.
Sapindaceae <i>Cardiospermum halicacabum</i> L.	binyana (Luo)	leaves & roots	Pounded, mixed with ghee and rubbed on the infection.
Sapotaceae <i>Manilkara sulcata</i> (Engl.) Dubard	kurag (Boni), mkuraki (Baj un)	leaves & roots	Pounded and the paste rubbed on the infection.
Solanaceae <i>Solanum incanum</i> L.	sodom apple (Trade) and many local names	fruits	Cut the fruit and apply the content. Contain the alkaloid solanine.
<i>Withania somnifera</i> (L.) Dun.	kipkogai (Mar), muanzo (Kamba)	fruits	Cut the fruit and apply the content.
Vitaceae <i>Cyphostemma cyphopetalum</i> (Fresen.) Descoings ex Wild & Drummond	kiptora (Mar)	leaves	Crushed and the paste applied on the infection.

SECTION C.

LEPROSY is a chronic disease which affects primarily the nerves and skin but other organs can also be affected. It is caused by *Mycobacterium leprae*, and occurs in two forms: Tuberculoid leprosy, affecting the skin and nerves mainly; and Lepromatous leprosy. The two major types of leprosy: Tuberculoid and Lepromatous can occur in four forms depending on the individual resistance or tissue response to the bacilli. The four forms are indeterminate, Tuberculoid, Borderline and Lepromatous. It is endemic to tropical and subtropical areas, and is an old disease mentioned in the biblical times. Although leprosy has not been easy to cure, the traditional medical practitioners have also played their part. Plant extracts, particularly oils have long been used to treat leprosy, though with limited success.

Table III : Leprosy herbal remedies

BOTANICAL NAME	NATIVE/TRADE NAME	PLANT PART USED	PREPARATION/COMMENT
Amaranthaceae <i>Cyathula cylindrica</i> Moq.	ng'atunyat (Kips)	whole plant (including roots)	Boiled and the decoction drunk and used for bathing.
Asclepiadaceae <i>Calotropis procera</i> (Ait.) Ait. f.	boah (Som), etithuru (Tur), mpamba-mwitu (Swa)	bark and roots	Boiled and the decoction drunk and used for bathing.
Boraginaceae <i>Cordia ovalis</i> R.Br. ex A.DC.	sandpaper tree (Trade), msasa (Swa), muthia (Kamba), mukuo (Meru, Kik), ol-seki (Mas), oseno (Luo)	leaves and roots	The patient is exposed to a steambath of the decoction, the body is then washed with the decoction, and a pounded paste of the bark rubbed on the infections.
Combretaceae <i>Combretum apiculatum</i> Sond.	kiama (Kamba)	roots	Decoction drunk for the treatment of the disease during its initial stages.
<i>Combretum molle</i> R. Br.	eguyen (Tur), kembel (Seb), keyo (Luo), kiama (Kamba), mwama (Taita), ol-mororoi (Mas)	roots	Decoction drunk.
Euphorbiaceae <i>Acalypha ornata</i> Hochst. ex A.Rich.	mtsatsa (Digo)	roots	Decoction drunk 2 - 3 times a day, and also used for bathing.
Simaroubaceae <i>Brucea antidysenterica</i> J.F. Mill.	kingame (Kamba)	leaves	Pounded, mixed with ghee and rubbed.
Vitaceae <i>Ampelocissus africana</i> (Lour.) Merr.	munwamadzi (Gir)	roots	Decoction drunk and some used for bathing

SECTION D

RINGWORM is a fungus infection of the skin and its appendages, and comprises infection by a number of genera of fungi of class Hyphomycetes. Some may only affect the skin e.g. *Malassezia furfur* and *Cladosporium werneckii*, whereas others go to the hair e.g. *Piedraia hortai* and *Trichosporon beigeli*. Cutaneous mycoses involving the hair and skin are produced by species of *Microsporum* and *Trichophyton*, and this is the group of various types of ringworm. The traditional treatment of the commonest type of ringworm which affects children's head, is done by first shaving the head and thereafter apply whatever herbal medicine is prescribed.

Table IV : Ringworm herbal remedies

BOTANICAL NAME	NATIVE/TRADE NAME	PLANT PART USED	PREPARATION/COMMENT
Asteraceae			
<i>Aspilia mossambicensis</i> (Oliv.) Wild	lilelie (Luhya) , muhepe (Digo), muti (Kamba) , raywetigo (Luo)	leaves, fruits	Pounded and rubbed on the infection.
Chenopodiaceae			
<i>Chenopodium album</i> L.	nyatigotigo (Luo)	leaves	Pounded, mixed with ail and the paste smeared on the infection.
<i>Chenopodium opulifolium</i> Auct. non Schrad.			For head infection, the hair is cut short to the scalp before the drug is applied. Contain some oil like ascaridole and can be very effective.
<i>Chenopodium pumilio</i> R.Br			
Fabaceae			
<i>Cassia didymobotrya</i> Fres.	ithaa (Kamba) , lubino (Luhya), kilao (Meru), mshua (Taita), mwino; (Kik), omovenyu (Gusii), owinu (Luo) , ol-senetoi (Mas), senetwet (Kips, Mar , Nan)	leaves	Pounded, mixed with ail and the paste smeared on the infection. Or burnt, as mixed with oil and smeared on the infection, the hair is cut short before the application of the drug.
Melastomataceae			
<i>Dissotis senegambiensis</i> (Guill. & Perr.) Triana	manyas-olele (Luo)	leaves	Pounded and the paste rubbed on the infection. Note the vernacular name manyas = medicine for olele = ringworm.
Oxalidaceae			
<i>Oxalis corniculata</i> L.	awayo (Luo)	whole plant	Pounded, mixed with ghee and the paste smeared on the infection. Contain oxalic acid in the form of acid potassium oxalate.
Sapindaceae			
<i>Allophylus abyssinicus</i> (Hochst.) Radlk.	lusasari (Luhya)	roots	Crushed, mixed with salt and oil and rubbed.
<i>Cardiospermum grandiflorum</i> Sw.	burili (Luhya)	leaves	Pounded and the paste rubbed on the infection.
Solanaceae			
<i>Datura stramonium</i> L.	barutu, chemongong (Kips), mwalola (Taita), silulu (Luhya)	leaves and seeds	Dry, grind, mix with ghee and smear on the infection. The plant is poisonous and contain alkaloids hyoscine, hyoscyamine and atropine.
<i>Solanum incanum</i> L.	sodom apple (Trade)	fruit	Cut or break the fruit and smear the juice on the infection. Widely used and believed to be effective. Contain alkaloid solanin, and is probably both antibacterial and antifungal.

CONCLUSIONS

The lore of the herbalist is unquestionably the treasure of Black African as a whole, a patrimony which we as modern scientists should preserve, propagate and improve on at all costs.

We are currently experiencing a fast disappearance of the genuine traditional herbalists and a decline of authentic knowledge in traditional medicine. It is therefore for the modern Kenyan biologists, chemists and doctors to find out the active principles contained in these plants and suggest how best such compounds can be made into modern medicines.

In fact, these are the kinds of research which are giving the American and European scientists new discoveries in modern antibiotics and drugs.

ABBREVIATIONS

Bor.	= Boran
Dor.	= Dorobo
Elgy.	= Eigeyo
Gir.	= Giriama
Kik.	= Kikuyu
Kips.	= Kipsigis
Mar	= Marakwet
Mas.	= Masai
Nan.	= Nandi
Seb.	= Sebei
Som.	= Somali
Swa.	= Swahili
Tai.	= Taita

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