

DAGOMBA PLANT NAMES

[PRELIMINARY CIRCULATION DRAFT FOR COMMENT]

1. DAGBANI-LATIN
2. LATIN-DAGBANI [NOT READY]
3. LATIN-ENGLISH COMMON NAMES [NOT READY]

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1. Introduction

The Dagomba are one of the most widespread and numerous peoples of Northern Ghana. They have two principal centres, Tamale and Yendi, centred in the Northern territories. Their language, Dagbani or Dagbanli, is widely known as a second language in north-eastern Ghana. Despite this, no dictionary of their language has ever been published and technical vocabulary such as the names of trees, plants and their products may be problematic to elicit.

Ethnobotanical information is essential to the work of foresters and others concerned with the environment. Local people have extensive knowledge both about the trees and plants in their region, their uses and distribution. In order to work effectively with communities on woodland management it is necessary to discuss individual plant species. This can only be done if it is clear that the forester has an effective identification base for the local language.

This guide¹ is intended to provide this for Dagbani by giving the singular and plural of as many plants as possible, in as accurate a transcription as possible. Where the plant has been identified, the Latin name and the common English name, if one exists, is given. In addition whatever is known about the use of the plant is added to the definition.

This guide only contains 'wild' plants, although some fruit trees, introduced as crops are now widespread in woodland areas. Similarly, it is common practice to transplant bush plants to the homestead for medicinal or other use and even to transplant some food species. Nonetheless, the Dagomba also have an extensive and complex repertoire of domestic plants, which are classified in a companion document².

This document also has a short section on Dagomba classification of vegetation. One of the sources of confusion in discussions between communities and extension workers is a failure to understand the different meanings applied

2. Transcription

Dagbani is a member of the Oti-Volta language group, which in turn forms one major branch of the Gur family (Manessy 1975). Its closest relatives are likely to be the languages Talni and Nabti. Most of these languages show marked vowel harmony and thus have either seven or nine vowels in \pm ATR pairs. Historically, in Ghana, the transcription of most languages has followed the pattern of Twi, with seven vowels, adding /ɛ/ and /ɔ/ to the five cardinal vowels. Despite this tradition, the phonology of Dagbani is exceptional. The open vowels /ɛ/ and /ɔ/ have merged with their closed counterparts and a central vowel /i/ has developed. This was represented in some orthographies with /i/ but most recent publications eschew this. Academic publications on Dagbani are (Fisch 1913; Benzing 1969, 1971; Wilson 1963, 1970, 1972 & 1976; Wilson & Bendor-Samuel 1969).

Despite its importance, Dagbani has no standard writing system. The orthography used in the Bible is not the same as that recommended in academic publications such as Wilson (1972) nor that used by the current Dagbani literacy committee. Present writing systems do not accurately represent the sounds of the language. The present manuscript is not intended as literacy material but as **a practical aid to those concerned with the environment in Northern Ghana**. The intention is therefore to transcribe Dagbani in a phonemic orthography so that words can be pronounced correctly. Readers may then convert words to a writing system with which they feel comfortable (see Table 1).

¹ I would like to thank Tony Naden, Gbeduuri, for making available to me unpublished Dagbani materials and to my field assistants, especially James Amaligo, Rural Forestry Department, Tamale, Joseph Ziblin of Yonḍuni and Mahama Afa Asumah of Tolon for working on this with me.

² 'Dagomba agriculture' R.M. Blench. Working Paper for 'Partnerships and Policies for Change' programme, Overseas Development Institute.

Dagbani has two dialects, East and West, centred around Yendi and Tamale. In many cases, words are very similar or the same in both dialects. Where differences have been recorded, there are given with the abbreviations;

ED Eastern or Yendi Dialect
 WD Western Dialect

The reference forms given here are based on the dialect of the Tamale area. The most common differences are vowel sounds, ways of forming the plural and the exchange of /r/ and /l/. Speakers seem to have little trouble adapting to these differences. The Nanumba people, speaking the Nani language, who live in scattered settlements in the south-east of the Dagomba area use very similar terms to those in Dagbani, often with small vowel changes.

Vowels

Dagbani has six vowels;

	Front	Central	Back
Close	i		u
Close-Mid	e	ɨ	o
Open		a	

These can all occur in any position except /ɨ/ which is confined to stems. Vowels may be long or short, except for /ɨ/. A long vowel is marked by doubling. Ghanaian orthographies traditionally mark seven vowels, i.e. the five symbols used in English together with ε and ɔ. These are actually unnecessary for Dagbani, although now that the tradition has been established, writing them will probably continue.

Table 1 shows how to convert these characters to those used here;

Table 1. Vowel conversion table

Commonly written		This document
ε	→	e
ɔ	→	o

The ɨ sound can be written as ‘i’ if the reader wishes to transcribe some of the words into one of the other Dagbani orthographies.

Consonants

The consonants are as follows;

	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Alveolar	Alveopalata l	Palata l	Velar	Labial-velar
Plosive	p b		t d	tʃ dʒ		k g	kp gb
Fricative		f v	s z	(ʃ) (ʒ)		h (ɣ)	
Nasal	m		n		ɲ	ŋ	ŋm
Lateral			l				
Tap/trill				r			
Approximant	w				y		

Most orthographies mark /ɣ/ the velar fricative as a separate consonant. This appears to be unnecessary as /ɣ/ is simply a positional allophone of /g/ between vowels. Nonetheless, it is marked in the present text as Dagbani speakers are familiar with it. The voiceless alveopalatal / tʃ / is usually written ‘ch’ in Ghanaian languages following English orthographic practice and this is also retained. The palatal nasal /ɲ/ is written ‘ny’. /ʃ/ is written ‘sh’ but /ʒ/ uses the IPA symbol. Both alveopalatal fricatives are allophones of their alveolar counterparts but they will be written here following Dagbani orthographic practice.

Tones

Ghanaian convention does not mark tone in orthographies, regardless of its importance in individual languages. The Dagbani tone system is described by Wilson (1970, 1972) and there is no doubt that a secure command of the tones is required to become a competent speaker of Dagbani. However, individual words spoken in isolation can usually be understood by speakers even if the tones are incorrect. This should not deter researchers from learning the correct tonal pattern for each plant name.

There are two level tones and downstep, marked as follows;

High	´
Downstep	!
Low	˘

Downstep is a type of high tone that lowers the pitch of the rest of the word.

Those who are not familiar with tones can simply ignore the tone marks and write the words without them.

DAGBANI DOES NOT HAVE A WRITING SYSTEM AGREED BY EVERYONE. IF SOME OF THE CONVENTIONS IN THIS GUIDE ARE DIFFERENT FROM THOSE YOU USE THEN SIMPLY CONVERT THEM. THE CORE OF THE GUIDE IS THE ACCURATE IDENTIFICATION OF PLANT NAMES.

Plurals and other forms

Like most Gur languages, Dagbani has an elaborate system of plurals for nouns that consist generally of alternating a CV suffix. However, in some cases these suffixes are irregular or have become reduced, and in some cases also the stem vowels undergo changes. Recording plurals is very important, as in many cases, the plural of a tree name is the name of its fruits or leaves. The plurals are given in the second column.

3. Botanical Sources

The most important source for Dagbani plant names are the lists appended to Irvine (1961). Irvine is essentially a survey of the woody plants of Ghana, but the lists are taken over, unrevised, from his earlier publication 'Plants of the Gold Coast' (Irvine 1930). This has two problems; the names listed in the Appendix sometimes refer to plants not in the text, and the scientific names were not updated and are therefore sometimes to outdated. As far as possible, I have tried to match these names with their most recent version.

Irvine's Dagbani lists were reprised in the first edition of 'The Useful Plants of West Tropical Africa' (Dalziel 1937). More Dagbani materials are contained in the publication in progress of the second edition (Burkill 1985, 1994, 1995) based also on herbarium specimens as well as exiting literature. Finally, there is a long list of Dagbani names contained in CIPSEG (1993) based on botanical surveys of sacred groves in the Tamale area.

Not all of these are necessarily accurate; the presence of several contradictory identifications in the sources makes this clear. However, the great majority were confirmed by present-day informants, as were many of the uses and beliefs recorded.

The major lexical source for Dagbani is Lehmann (n.d.) which has extensive data on plant names. Many of these can be identified through comparison with the ethnobotanical sources. Lehmann has the advantage that the transcriptions are generally more reliable and the plurals are usually given. Additional materials were added from the author's fieldwork in Ghana from February 1997 onwards. I would

Transcriptions in ethnobotanical sources

The transcriptions are very variable, since they are usually compiled from herbarium sheets, so they represent the whim of individual botanists. Nevertheless, in most cases they are recognisable. However, the forms given are in the seven-vowel transcription common in Ghana but inappropriate for Dagbani, never tone-marked and always without the plurals and derived forms for fruit or leaves.

Queries

The sources provide a number of names that cannot be identified by present-day Dagbani speakers. There may be several reasons for this;

- a) the transcription is so garbled that speakers simply cannot recognise it as a word they know.
- b) the word was recorded in a remote area where the plant exists but the plant is not present in the more densely farmed areas
- c) the word is actually in another language, Twi or Mampruli for example, and is thus not recognised.

Such queries are placed at the end of the list in the hope that some may be identified in future.

4. Terminology

Latin names are given for all the plants identified, along with the authorities, which may seem to add a layer of unnecessary complexity. However, the practice of botanists of constantly changing their minds on the names of even quite common and well established economic plants makes this necessary. In recent years, even the name of the shea tree, probably the single most important tree for farmers in northern Ghana, has been changed from *Butyrospermum parkii* to *Vitellaria paradoxa*. The authorities identify the name given at a particular period so that in future, if the name changes again, or the taxonomists reclassify it, the correct identification can be traced.

5. Uses and cultural importance of Plants

Ethnobotany has two major uses; naming plants accurately allows professionals such as foresters to talk with communities effectively about vegetation. But beyond identification, the real value of this is to determine the role particular plants play in the economic and cultural life of communities. The uses recorded here have been identified within the Dagomba community. For many plants, no use is yet recorded, but almost certainly the plant plays a part either in the extensive medical herbarium or for more practical economic purposes.

In the past, many more wild plants were used as additional sources of food. Before fruit such as oranges and mangoes became readily available in the market, wild fruits were much more appreciated. Many of these trees have now retreated to remote areas to be replaced by planted trees close to villages. In the same way, a large number of plants are noted in earlier sources as ‘famine foods’ i.e. plants that can be eaten after processing in cases of severe food shortage. The development of food relief has meant that much of the knowledge about such wild plants is in danger of being lost. So when such information is recorded, it does not mean that it is current practice but reminds people of the potential of such plants.

Beyond this, plants also play a role in cultural life. Beliefs about trees or plants may affect whether they are protected or cut down and whether the fruits are eaten.

6. Dagomba vegetation classification

The Dagomba classify vegetation according to very different criteria from European botany. It is not enough to simply translate **tíá** as ‘tree’ or **móyú** as ‘grass’. Table 2 shows the main groups and the types of plant that fall into them;

Singular	Plural	Vegetation classes included
tíá	tíhí	tree, shrub, epiphyte
móyú	móri	grass, sedge, small plant
bínzórli	bínzóra	vine, creeper, liana
màlèyú	màlèrí	mushroom, fungus
nóyólí		vegetable gall

Apart from this, vegetation is also classified according to the position of the fruit or tuber, as follows;

bín-wóndà	any plant which has fruits above ground
bín-nyárà	any plant which has fruits or tubers below ground

In addition, the generic term **tibée** pl. **tibéhi** refers to all trees, such as **gaa**, **tua** and **nyoo**, believed to shelter spirits.

títáblí **títábà** general term to describe the entwining of two different species of trees or herbs

7. Further work

The present document consists of a preliminary synthesis of existing field materials on Dagbani. It needs substantial checking in the field both in terms of content, transcription and expansion of the ethnobotanical aspects.

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DAGBANI - ENGLISH/LATIN

Singular	Plural	Gloss
A.		
àlépèlè bìndì		herb of wasteland <i>Tridax procumbens</i> L.
àlúúrà	~ -nìmá	eaten by animals. et. ‘aeroplane shit’ teak tree <i>Tectona grandis</i>
àntírìnyà	~ nìmá	< H. ‘needle’. A fast-growing plantation tree used for firewood and occasionally for furniture. cashew tree and fruit <i>Anacardium occidentale</i>
apamaban àsóómà	~ nìmá	et. A shortened form of atiri yi nya ‘the one who will get and give you’ <i>Ludwigia abyssinica</i> A. Rich.
àtúzéyù	àtúzèrì	turmeric <i>Curcuma domestica</i> Val. plant with bulbous roots used in dyeing skins yellow, hence yellow colour. shrub The leaves and roots are used for medicine. et. ‘plant + red’
B.		
bàdàlì	bàdàyá	vine with a large underground tuber The vine-stem is rubbed on sores on the legs of small ruminants and dogs.
bàgààlúa	—	acacia tree <i>Acacia nilotica</i> (Linn.) Willd.
bàlàṅbèlè bàlàṅbìnì	bàlàṅbìná	The pods are used for tanning. < H. also gbànzàbgóó See bàlàṅbìnì An annual herb growing on waste ground Also bàlàṅbèlè <i>Borreria octodon</i> Hepper <i>Pandiaka heudelotii</i> (Moq.) Hook f.
bàndóbà	—	Also powanyakruga zuperi climbing plant, the leaves of which are used as a purgative. Proverb: Ti naa maa ṅmanla bandoba tom laylayi Our chief is like the bitter <i>bandoba</i> plant i.e. Chiefs are not easy people to deal with
bàndùyrìgù	bàndùyrìsì	bushy plants usually grown on or near compounds, effective against fever. Often an ingredient in children’s medicines. There are two types, yìṅ bàndùyrìgù or ‘house ~’ which is planted around the

Singular	Plural	Gloss
bàyàngà	bàyànsì	compound and móyní (or yo) bándùyrìgù ‘bush ~’ which is collected from the bush scrambling shrub camel’s foot <i>P. reticulatum</i> (DC.) Hochst. The leaves used to pack cassava and Bambara groundnuts to put in boiling water for cooking. The leaves are used as a plaster to cover sores on children’s legs. Children can be cured of measles by bathing them in an infusion of leaves. The fibre can be used to make a rope.
bàḡlàyú	bàḡlàrí	<i>Tephrosia purpurea</i> (L) Pers. The leaves are fed to goats and sheep. The twigs are used for roasting kebabs.
báḡlì	—	vine up to 2m. Women use it to make soup. They cook the leaves, pour of the water and then pound the residue.
bàḡmáríḡá	—	The name means ‘floodland star’ so presumably a plant of damp areas
bàrè kpàndáá		Four-leaved senna <i>Cassia absus</i> L.
bàrgá	bàrsí	shrub to 3m. grown on the farms The leaves are used for soup and bark for making rope.
bàrùḡwìní bèèní	bàrùḡbìná —	<i>Spermacoce stachydea</i> Creeper with a very long root. The root is crushed and mixed with water to form a sort of glue. This is mixed with the sand used for building houses to ensure the rain doesn’t wash away the walls.
benyoyò tirigu		<i>Acroceras zizanioides</i> Dandy see also manci
bìbìrètútúyú	bìbìrètútúrí	shrub <i>Cochlospermum planchoni</i> Hook. f or <i>C. tinctorium</i> A. Rich. (Cochlospermaceae) Also tákpáríḡá lóòrì
bìná	—	sedge with fragrant rhizome; wild tiger nut <i>Cyperus articulatus</i> Linn. see nansagti kpìrli , yìḡ bìná , yò bìná . Rhizome used as a remedy for coughs. There are two types, the cultivated type and the type found in the bush.
bìrìlì	bìrà	Any plant of the <i>Hibiscus</i> genus whose leaves are used as spinach. Particularly <i>Hibiscus surattensis</i> L.
bim	bimà	Used to make rope. Also kananjuḡ , pianeyemere shrub used to poison fish <i>Tephrosia vogelii</i> Hook f.
birimia	birimhi	also a generic term for any fish-poison shrub used for making rope

Singular	Plural	Gloss
biyólí simlè bòcháá	biyólí simà bòchéhí	<i>Alysicarpus ovalifolius</i> (Schum. & Thonn.) J. Leonard witchweed see wùblím
bùgú	bùrí	herb with a bulb beneath the ground <i>Tacca leontopetaloides</i> (L) O. Ktze
bùdùnì	bùdùnà	shrub whose roots are used as chewsticks and which make the teeth red <i>Waltheria indica</i> L. or <i>Cleome viscosa</i> L.
bùkpùṅá	bùkpùnsí	ordeal tree <i>Erythrophleum africanum</i> (Welw. ex Benth.) Harms Cut for firewood, but poisonous to animals.
bùlágbíriwó	bùlágbírsí	<i>Cissus</i> sp. et. he-goat + scratch + head. Goats scratch their heads against this plant when they are aching.
bulasam		Small herb with yellow flowers used as a broom <i>Sida acuta</i> Burm f. Also sambaṅ kana
bulimbugu	bulimburi	Custard–apple <i>Annona senegalensis</i> Pers. Tree with edible fruit. Insects easily invade a plucked fruit. Leaves are fed to animals. Roots are used to treat waist-pain.
buntibli	buntiba	shrub <i>Stylochiton hypogaeus</i> Lepr.
bùsápírigù	bùsápírsì	tree <i>Feretia apodanthera</i> Del.
C.		
chenchen dibga chímà	—	<i>Kohautia senegalensis</i> thatching grass <i>Pennisetum pedicellatum</i> Trin.
chínchééṅà also chíncéréṅcǐṅà	chínchénsì	trees of the <i>Entada</i> group <i>Entada africana</i> Guill. & Perr., <i>E. abyssinica</i> Steud. ex Rich. see náṅnyóóntià
D.		
dàbgà	dábsí	shrub fed to horses Used as a chewstick.
dàkòl gbɛṅkpagle dàkòl sàgábo'rlí	dàkòl sàgábo'rá	see below wild plant with small edible brown berries et. 'bachelor + handful of porridge' <i>Eugenia subherbacea</i> A. Chev.

Singular	Plural	Gloss
		<i>Fadogia agrestis</i> Schweinf. Also dàkòl gbiṅkpagle, sòylàkàb'gá tree with edible fruit (not eaten in this area)
dàṅkùṅá	dàṅkùnsí	<i>Hymenocardia acida</i> Tul.
dàsáá nyínyáyú	~ nyínyárí	thistles of the <i>Centaurea</i> group, star-thistle <i>Centaurea praecox</i> Oliv. and Hiern. et. ? + 'claws'
dàsàṅá	dàsàndí	empty dawadawa pod. See dòó
dàzèmám	—	thatching grass <i>Andropogon pseudapricus</i> Stapf
dàzùlí	dàzùyá	Trees or shrubs of the <i>Gardenia</i> genus Proverb: Kuliga dazuli kom dir' o k' o mi dir' kayli . Water uproots the <i>dazuli</i> tree (during floods) and in its turn it spoils the reeds (the high grass).
dàzù nàánaáyà		shrub with small, edible apple-like fruit and sweet-smelling yellow or white blossoms. <i>Gardenia erubescens</i> Stapf & Hutch. <i>Gardenia ternifolia</i> Schum. & Thonn.
dàzù nímbóyù		shrub <i>Gardenia</i> sp.
dàzù tikpùrìlí		<i>Ageratum conyzoides</i> L.
dìnkpànyúlí	dìnkpànyúyá	date palm
dòbínó	dòbínó nímà	< H.
dókúl'zèm	dókúl'zèmà	the flower (corolla) of the dawadawa (locust) tree.
dòyó	dòrí	dawadawa pods on the tree Proverb: Jaṅ ' bil' lu kpaya galem dòrí, ni kpi kum biɛyɔ . The small monkey fell sick and accused dawadawa pods; he'll die a very bad death. (he won't have anything else to eat). If a child turns against his breadwinner, his parents, he'll suffer.
dòó	dòhí	dawadawa tree locust tree <i>Parkia biglobosa</i> (Jacq.) R Br. ex Don The seeds are fermented and made into strong-smelling cakes sold to flavour food. The yellow powder inside the pods is eaten as a snack and boiled up into a sweet drink. The roots and empty seed pods are boiled into a liquid used to seal floors and walls. A weak solution of this is used for stomach medicine. The bark is burnt and mixed with earthworm casts and used to smooth away scars. the bark is also soaked and the water is rubbed on the skin for 'bone pain' [arthritis?].
dòmàlèyù	dòmàlèrí	Fungus growing on the dawadawa tree
dòzím	dòzímá	yellow flour from the dawadawa (locust) pod singular form serves as an adjective, preceding the noun qualified meaning yellow

Singular	Plural	Gloss
F.		
filasiko		senna <i>Senna alata</i> (Linn.) Roxb. < H.
fɪr`gɪnlɪ	fɪrgɪmá	aerial yam <i>Dioscorea bulbifera</i> L. Cultivated by planting at the foot of trees, but also found in the wild. Wild forms tend to be toxic. Also kuru fɪr`gɪnlɪ . Proverb: Fɪrgɪmá nayiɣa be m-be n-guli ku lo bɔbma . The thief turns the string around and cannot tie them up (because they are round). Said to someone who tries to defeat someone cleverer than him.
fùlùmfulàà	fùlùmfulàhì	<i>Commelina africana</i> (L.) name means 'male <i>Commelina</i> '
fùlùmfunyâŋ	fùlùmfunyámà	name means 'female <i>Commelina</i> '
fùlùŋfùgù	fùlùŋfùrì	<i>Commelina</i> sp.
fùùkáyí	fùkáyá	bristly foxtail grass <i>Setaria pumila</i> (Poir.) Roem. & Schult. also <i>Echinocloa crus pavoni</i> Schult.
G.		
gàà	gàhí	ebony tree monkey-guava <i>Diospyros mespiliformis</i> Hochst ex A.DC. The tree is said to be the home of the wood-sprites Kpukparsi , and as such may not be cut for firewood. The roots are used in a decoction to drive away spirits. The fruits are edible and in some parts of Dagombaland are the property of the village chief. Proverb: Zakpaleɣu zaysi kɪŋkama ka lee ŋubri gawuɣla . The <i>zakpaleɣu</i> bird refused figs and eats gaya fruits. Figs are easy to get and fresh and false ebony fruits have fallen on the ground and are dry and not tasty.
gàb`lí	gàb`lá	fruit of the gàbligá tree
gàbligá	gàblisí	small thorn tree with edible fruit used to make the stocks of guns <i>Balanites aegyptiaca</i> (Balanitaceae)
gàhàŋ gwòlúgú	gwàhàŋ gwòlsí	tree with very soft wood tree <i>Hannoa undulata</i> (Guill. & Perr.) Planch. or <i>Quassia undulata</i> ? The ease with which the branches break has made this tree proverbial for suicides. The roots are used as an aphrodisiac.

Singular	Plural	Gloss
gàlìnzègù	gàlìnzèrì	<i>Cussonia arborea</i> Hochst. [formerly <i>barteri</i>] tree or epiphyte on other species gutta-percha tree <i>Ficus platyphylla</i> Del. also gàlìnzènyâṅ . A liquid is tapped from the root and rubbed on a swollen body. The bark is an ingredient in various secret love-philtres.
gàlìnzèláá	gàlìnzèláhí	tree(s) of the <i>Ficus</i> group <i>Ficus iteophylla</i> Miq. or <i>Ficus glumosa</i> Del. var. <i>glaberrima</i> name means ‘male <i>Ficus</i> ’
gàlìnzènyâṅ	gàlìnzènyámà	fig-tree see gàlìnzègù name means ‘female <i>Ficus</i> ’. The water from boiled leaves is given to a child that is not walking properly.
gàmpìr`gá	gàmpìr`sí	tree(s) of the <i>Ficus</i> group including gàmpillaa and gàmpilnyaṅ Proverb: gàmpiri suṅ ṅi layim zii ni ba . A good fig tree will gather people to sit under it.
gàmpiláá	gàmpiláhí	tree <i>Ficus thonningii</i> Blume
gàmpil`nyâṅ	gàmpil`nyámà	fig-tree <i>Ficus polita</i> Vahl
gàrìnyíní	gàrìnyíná	<i>Acacia macrostachya</i> Reichenb. ex Benth. also nyera
garli	gara	creeper
gársa`blì	gársa`blà	shrub or liana <i>Combretum dolichopetalum</i> Engl. & Diels
gárzégù	gárzèrì	shrub or liana <i>C. paniculatum</i> Vent. <i>spp. paniculatum</i>
gááli	gáyá	fruit of the ebony, gaa (<i>Diospyros mespiliformis</i>)
gbanzabgoo	gbanzabgohi	acacia tree whose pods are used for tanning. <i>Acacia nilotica</i> (Linn.) Willd. also bagalua
gbànzá(lí)ṅgá	gbànzá(lí)nsí	tree used for pestles and roof frames <i>Burkea africana</i> Hook.
gbébà		Tall aromatic herb <i>Hyptis pectinata</i> (Linn.) Poit. (Labiatae)
gbìrgá	gbìrsí	shrubs of the <i>Combretum</i> group <i>Combretum molle</i> R. Br. and <i>C. nigricans</i> Lepr. The chewstick is used to keep the teeth firm. The fibre is boiled to treat internal sores.
gbùṅgbàṅ	gbùṅgbàmà	tall grass used for making mats. Grows where land has not been cultivated.
gingagli		the tender leaves of gingagigoo which is boiled and served as food in time of famine. (E.D.) gingagri (W.D.)
gìngàgóó	gìngàgóhí	see gìngàtiă

Singular	Plural	Gloss
gìngàtiá	gìngàtíhí	snuffbox tree shrub with edible fruits which are also used for making snuffboxes <i>Strychos spinosa</i> Lam. Also púmpónchíà
gólínchémà	—	scrambling thorny shrub <i>Mimosa pigra</i> Linn.
góndílí	góndá	pawpaw, papaya tree and fruit <i>Carica papaya</i> Linn. < H.
góópóhágà	góópóhási	acacia with highly scented roots, effective to cure neuralgia. Thorny with a sap used for glue
góópiélgà góóziê	góópiélsi gózéhì	acacia with white bark. acacia with red bark <i>Acacia dudgeoni</i> Craib Also wàrfáá
gotaba		khakiweed <i>Alternanthera pungens</i> H.B. & K.
gùlúngùṅ	gùlúngùmà	shrub sp. <i>Nauclea latifolia</i> Smith The fruit is edible. The bitter leaves are boiled for medicine. The roots are cut up and used as medicine for toothache and a sore throat. If bees go to this plant it makes their honey bitter.
gúmáchúyàzùlì	gúmáchúyàzùyà	tall grass used in weaving gbala mats to cover doorways The name means ‘chameleon’s tail’ referring to the shape of the flower.
gùmb’lá gùmbóyú gumboyri	gùmbíhí — ?	kapok seedlings kapok seeds. See also kanton An erect herb or small shrub. Grows both in the house and in the bush. The seeds are brought from the bush and planted around the house. It flowers in the dry season and has many seeds. Used for a medicine to aid in childbirth.
gùnààzúá gùṅá	gùnààzúé gùnsí	<i>Hoslundia opposita</i> Vahl kapok tree <i>Ceiba pentandra</i> (L) Gaertn.
gùṅgùmdí gùṅgùmlí gwávà	— gùṅgùmá gwává nímà	kapok lint used to stuff pillows kapok pod guava tree and fruit <i>Psidium guajava</i> Linn. < E.

Singular	Plural	Gloss
J.		
jàŋ kúnón nyúli		<i>Boerhavia coccinea</i> Mill. et. cat's yam. Children set out the tubers as if they were yams when pretending to make farms
jáŋ sínsábǵá	jáŋ sínsábáá	Tree with small red edible fruits
jáŋ yó kòrli		<i>Lannea sp.</i> <i>Polycarpa corymbosa</i> (L.) Lam. (Caryophyllaceae) et. 'monkey's old penis'
jèŋgbè yògrlí	jèŋgbè yògrá	Also given as <i>Kyllinga squamulata</i> Thonn. ex Vahl flowering tree <i>Moringa oleifera</i> Lam. i.e. Hausa yògrlí
jèŋkpibrigóó	jèŋkpibrigóhí	shrub whose roots are used for medicine <i>?Asparagus africanus</i> Lam. et. Hausa + ? + thorn. If people want to catch house-bats or prevent them from flying into a space they spread these thorns across and the bats will become entangled in the thorns
jìriyúŋ	jìriyúamá	balsam spurge shrub <i>Euphorbia balsamifera</i> Ait.
K.		
káá	káhí	edible shrub, with white flowers. <i>? Cleome viscosa</i> [kalaa in source]
kàǵálóm	—	immature káǵlí grass
káǵlí	káǵá	elephant grass <i>Pennisetum purpureum</i> Schumach. A tall swamp grass used for gbala mats and doorway coverings.
kahinkoyu nyuli	—	A vine with a large underground tuber of no food value. The tuber consists of fibrous rings like an onion with no flesh inside. Proverb: nam-ŋmanla kahinkoyu nyuli kinship is like k~ i.e it has rings of complexity but may turn out to be useless in the end
kálífi máálám	—	small herb with tiny, numerous seeds. Muslims gather the seeds and mix them with cereals when sowing in order to multiply the crop. Name and concept borrowed from Hausa.
kàl'wá	kàl'wà nɛ́má	prob. <i>Evolvulus asinoides</i> (Linn.) Linn. tree with thorns on the trunk whose roots are used as medicinal herbs.
kàl'wá bihili	kàl'wá biha	thorn of the kàl'wá tree, used as a medicine for swellings, etc. A stone is soaked with water and the thorn rubbed against it to make a paste. This is then

Singular	Plural	Gloss
kàmbàṅá	kàmbàamá	applied to the swelling. tree <i>Hannoa undulata</i> (Guill. & Perr.) Planch. The branches are used for roofs and the bitter bark is made into medicine.
kantonɔ		cakes made from the fermented seeds of the baobab and kapok fruits as a condiment for soup also gumbogu
kàsàláá		<i>Euphorbia</i> sp.
kàsàlí		<i>Euphorbia</i> sp.
kìṅkàm`lí	kìṅkàmá	fruit of the kìṅkaṅa tree. Edible but usually left for the bats
kìṅkàṅà	kìṅkànsí	fig tree <i>Ficus gnaphalocarpa</i> (Miq.) Steud. ex A. Rich.
kìṅkàṅ sálgú	kìṅkàṅ sálsí	fig tree <i>Ficus capensis</i> Thunb.
kìṅkàṅ zàysigú	kìṅkàṅ zàysísí	<i>Ficus</i> sp. A tree whose leaves cause itching. The roots are very popular for medicine and as a result, trees are rather rare in the Tamale area.
kìrìṅá	kìrìnsí or kìrìmà	<i>Flacourtia flavescens</i> Willd.
kirirema		said by FRI to be a name for <i>Diospyros mespiliformis</i> , but probably a mistake
kùlnyúrlí	kùlnyúrá	reed whose hollow stem is used as a straw
kofe		<i>Cyperus haspan</i> Linn.
konyirigo		<i>Vossia cuspidata</i> Griff.
kòrìnrhí	—	herb whose corm is used for medicine <i>Curculigo pilosa</i> (Schum. & Thonn.) Engl. Also táringúli
kòrìntàlí	kòrìntàyá	herb with a woody base, with burs and spines. Only found in remote areas. Said to be poisonous <i>Pupalia lappacea</i> (Linn.) Juss.
kòrlàṅgbàndí	kòrlàṅgbàná	tree with large leaves <i>Terminalia macroptera</i> Guill. & Perr. et. <i>Terminalia</i> + skin (referring to the leaves) also korli nyau
kòrlí	kòrá	trees of the <i>Terminalia</i> group <i>Terminalia avicennioides</i> Guill. & Perr. and <i>Terminalia glaucescens</i> Planch.
kòrlínyâṅ	kòrlínyámà	tree <i>Terminalia macroptera</i> Guill. & Perr. also kòrlàṅgbàndí
kòyém	—	shrub whose sap is squeezed into milk by cowherds to thicken it also lánjám
kpààliégù	kpààliéri	Horse-bean. Climbing plant with long pods used by women to make music. ? <i>Canavalia ensiformis</i>

Singular	Plural	Gloss
kpáájwu ¹ ndúgù	—	bushy grass-like lemon grass, but with smaller leaves and with a powerful odour. Used for children's medicine.
kpáákpà	kpáákpà nìmá	oil-palm <i>Elaeis guineensis</i> palm kernels The oil is used extensively in cooking and is also traded widely. < H. ?
kpáákpàl kpáám	—	pericarp oil of oil-palm
kpàgàzàwú	—	tree sp.
kpagligu	kpaglisi	tree with edible fruit. (E.D.) (kpagrìga , W.D.)
kpagrìga	kpagrìsi	tree with edible fruit. (W.D.) (kpagliga , E.D.) tallow tree <i>Detarium senegalense</i> JF Gmelin
kpàgú	kpàrí	raffia palm <i>Raffia sudanica</i>
kpakpwele kushikom	—	<i>Heteranthera callifolia</i> Richb. ex. Kunth
kpalsa	kpalsi	shrub used to make mortars and for firewood. It has black seeds and hard pods. Fruit not eaten. also yokpali <i>Securidaca longepedunculata</i> Fres. or <i>Detarium microcarpum</i> Guill. & Perr. [?]
kpálbíyá	kpáligú or kpálbíhí	cakes made from fermented locust seeds
kpàlsóyú	kpàlsárí	doka tree <i>Isobertinia doka</i> Craib & Stapf
kpàlsò pièlègá	kpàlsò pièl` sí	tree used for firewood. The fresh leaves are fed to cattle. <i>Isobertinia tomentosa</i> (Harms) Craib & Stapf
kpámvóyù	—	grass used for animal feed
kpajbili	—	plant found in the bush but also cultivated The name means 'guinea-fowl breast' and if you put the leaves in soup it will taste of guinea-fowl
kpajguli	NC	tree <i>Azelia africana</i> Sm. also kpalaṅa
kpansogwa	—	tunrsole, cock's comb <i>Heliotropium indicum</i> Linn.
kpáráciâ	kpárácihì	Snuff- box tree <i>Oncoba spinosa</i> Forsk. The fruit is edible and the fruit-shells are dried and used as containers
kpargani	—	<i>Cochlospermum planchonii</i> Hook. f Also bibere(tu)tugu, tákpárigá lóòrì
kpáripìhigà	kpáripìhìsì	small shrub with toxic milky latex. The sap is fed to children said to be afflicted with evil spirits. Children use it to raise scars on the skin. <i>Sapium grahamii</i> (Stapf) Prain
kpìhìgá	kpìhìsì	ackee apple tree.

Singular	Plural	Gloss
		<i>Blighia sapida</i> Konig. The fruit is much appreciated but not common as it depends on deep fertile soil. The name is also applied to the cashew (<i>Anacardium occidentale</i>)
kpìhìlí kpùññòyù	kpìhá kpùññòrì	ackee apple fruit frankincense tree used for rafters
kpííñà kpíííí	kpíhì kpíííí	<i>Boswellia dalzielii</i> Hutch. shea nut. See tááñà small tree used to make hoe handles
kpùkpàlgá	kpùkpàlá or kpùkpàlsí	<i>Pericopsis laxiflora</i> (Benth.) van Meeuwen or <i>Afromosia laxiflora</i> (Benth. ex Bak.) fan palm
kpùkpàlgbǎñ	kpùkpàlgbàná	<i>Borassus aethiopicum</i> The leaves are used for weaving hats and fans. The interior of the fruit can be eaten.
kpùñkpàñgón	kpùñkpàñgóná	fan palm See kpùkpàlgá false acha grass, ditch millet
kpùñkpàñkuñmeli	kpùñkpàñkuñmeya	<i>Paspalum scrobiculatum</i> Linn. A bad weed of cereal fields, it sends out runners. If you pull it up it will leave part of the plant in the ground to regrow.
kúgá	kúgsí	tree with brittle wood that snaps easily and sends splinters flying. No fruit. Used for firewood. like yokayinga mahogany
kùlchí	—	<i>Khaya senegalensis</i> The wood is used for mortars and the bark boiled for medicine.
kùlgárlí	kùlgára	white water lily <i>Nymphaea lotus</i> L. probably applies to other plant spp. covering open water
kulgoo		et. river + millet. Produces a small edible grain used as a famine food or eaten by children. The fresh leaves are ground and then applied to boils.
kulima		small evergreen tree producing a thick shade. Animals shelter under it. The plants interweave with one another producing a dense mat of vegetation.
kulkarjee		tree <i>Acacia sieberiana</i> DC. var. <i>Villosa</i> A. Chev. et. ‘river-thorn’ swamp morning-glory <i>Ipomoea aquatica</i> Linn.
kùlkàrlí	kùlkàrá	grass used to make bracelets Proverb: kulkarjee ku ñman’ baña . A grass bracelet can’t resemble a real bracelet.
		vetiver, a grass used for plaiting hats and baskets.

Singular	Plural	Gloss
kù(l)`kpàryòò	kù(l)`kpàryòhí	<i>Vetiveria nigrítana</i> (Benth.) Stapf drumstick tree (W.D.) <i>Cassia sieberiana</i> DC
kùlsáá	kùlsáhí	kukpalyoo (E.D.) Used to treat stomach pains. nut-grass used to treat garli cattle worms <i>Cyperus maculatus</i> Boeck. and <i>Cyperus rotundus</i> Linn.
kultii	kultihí	tree <i>Syzygium guineense</i> DC var. <i>guineense</i> et. ‘river-tree’ The tree has strong roots and cannot be carried away by floods. Proverb: kopaliga mali kpion, ka kultii mali woli The river may have a strong current, but ~ has strong roots
kùlúṅgbúlùṅ	kùlúṅgbúlimà	tree sp. A tree with very pliable wood. The bark is ground up and applied to swellings.
kuluṅkuma		<i>Tridax procumbens</i> Linn. Also banyoyo
kúmbágítíà	kúmbágítihì	shrub usually grown near a large tree for support. et. ‘nearby tree’
kùndùṅ bógólé	kùndùṅ bógólá	<i>Cassia obtusifolia</i> L. Also tikùbláákùm pierli et. ‘hyena shrine’.
kùndùṅ piém	kùndùṅ piémá	grass with arrow-shaped heads. et. ‘hyena arrow’. Used for thatching and eaten by horses.
kùndùṅ yóli	kùndùṅ yóyà	large toadstool et. ‘hyena penis’
kùrù fírgíní	kùrù fírgímá	shrub
L		
lám		Bengal bean plant, cow-itch <i>Mucuna pruriens</i> A vine with hairy pods which cause intolerable itching on contact with the skin. If people are gathering for a purpose you disapprove of, gather the hairs of the pod in your palm and blow them out into the crowd which will quickly disperse.
làṅgàndilí	làṅgàndá	? <i>Kigelia africana</i>
lángír’ndóò	lángír’ndóhì	Also wóbtíà herb or shrub <i>Aeschynome afraspera</i> J. Leonard Also tàbà dúgù nyûrgú . When dry the pithy stems are collected by women to start fires. et. ‘skirt of dawadawa tree’ – leaves resemble this tree. Children use the stems to pretend to smoke

Singular	Plural	Gloss
lànjà̀m	lànjà̀mà	Also given as <i>Chamaecrista mimosoides</i> shrub sp. see kòyém
lànjà̀nǎ	lànjà̀nsí	tree used to make charcoal <i>Prosopis africana</i> (Guill. & Perr.) Taub. also nanzili
lèmú	—	citrus fruit (generic)
lèmú nyámí	—	lime tree and fruit
lilíngǎ	lilínsi	African wild cherry tree and fruits <i>Ximenia americana</i> Linn.
lilínli	lilímà	fruit of the lilíngǎ tree
linliríng	linlir`má	wild yam used for medicine <i>Dioscorea lecardii</i> De Willd.
lòòzúlí	lòòzúyá	globe amaranth <i>Gomphrena celosoides</i> (Amaranthaceae) also ɲonsure . Eaten by cows. Herb to 1 m. et. ‘bush-mouse tail’ Also <i>Evolvulus alsinoides</i> (L.) L. and <i>Sacciolepis africana</i>
lùkpòyú	lùkpòrí	large herb with a tuber <i>Amorphophallus dracontioides</i> (Bl.) Engl.
lù̀ngkù̀ngmááǎǎ	lù̀ngkù̀ngmánsí	semi-cultivated yam with aerial tubers. <i>Dioscorea macroura</i> et. ‘fall + kill + monkey’. It is believed that when the aerial tubers drop down, monkeys die.
M.		
màlèyú	màlèrí	toadstool, mushroom, fungus (generic term) The fungus that grows on specific tree species is describe by putting the name of the tree in front of this word.
màmóǎmà¹ kpám	—	small herb eaten by domestic stock <i>Stylosanthes mucronata</i> Willd. et. ‘my mother denied me oil’
manci		<i>Acroceras zizanioides</i> see also benyoyo tirigu
mání mábíhégè	mání mábíhà	shrub reaching 1.5 m. <i>Annona glauca</i> Schum. & Thonn. Also recorded as mampihege
màṅ	—	erect herb to 2m. The name is also the name of a disease of children and a medicine is made from the leaves and branches to treat it. Before cutting the tree an offering of coins or cola must be made.
màṅ mabele	—	<i>Eclipta alba</i>
màṅ zògòlà	màṅ zògòlàhí	white flower. The leaves are applied to the skin to

Singular	Plural	Gloss
mbevele titoyo mìmìṣṣà	mìmìnsì	bring back its normal colour. <i>Cochlospermum planchonii</i> red hog plum tree <i>Spondias monbin</i> also mùmòyḷi . Now rare in this region
mimiini mòpèlè móyú	mimia mòpèlè móri	fruit of the red hog-plum tree tsauri grass preferred for thatching <i>Cymbopogon giganteus</i> Chiov.
móyú mubane zowla mùmòyḷi mùmòyṭia	móri mùmòyḷà mùmòyṭihi	grass, herbs, small plants (generic term) <i>Euphorbia convolvuloides</i> Hochst. ex Benth. Fruit of mùmòyṭia red hog plum tree <i>Spondias monbin</i> Also mìmìṣṣà . The roots are used in a decoction for stomach trouble. The bark is used in a medicine with other ingredients to cure anthrax. The leaves together with kpalba are soaked for an inhalation taken for seven days to cure ‘whole-body’ pain.
N.		
nàà náá kpórosòṅ nàblí	nàà náá kpórosòṅdè —	<i>Biophytum petersianum</i> Klotzsch vine with numerous tubers the name derives from a verb meaning ‘to multiply’ and it is used in remedies that require increase. The boiled leaves are used to bathe thin children and the dried tuber is mixed with cereal seeds to increase the yield.
nàgyèm	—	grass with a very thin stem et. ‘cow’s wisdom’. When a woman gives birth they boil it in water to bathe the baby <i>Vernonia cinerea</i> ?
nàylo¹rigù náynyóóntíà	nàylo¹r¹sì náynyóóntíhì	grass used for brooms and grazed by livestock tree with long slender pods <i>Entada africana</i> Guill. & Perr. Also chinceeṅa [=chíncéréṅcínà]. et. < náynyóóṅá ‘insect sp. that lands on flowers’. Used to ‘smash’ or sour milk.
nagpuri nàgsàà		grass sp. grass <i>Sporobolus jacquemontii</i> Kunth
náytipchèrigà	náytipchèr¹sì	jujube tree <i>Ziziphus mauritiana</i> Lam. also zìṅgúlí kúkuà
nahi nyamere		perennial herb of the <i>Aneilema</i> group <i>Aneilema lanceolatum</i> Benth.

Singular	Plural	Gloss
nam		< F. aqueous extract from empty locust pod
nansagli	nansaga	tiger nut <i>Cyperus esculentus</i> Linn.
nansagti kpirli	nansagti kpira	sedge with fragrant rhizome; wild tiger nut <i>Cyperus articulatus</i> Linn.
nanzili	nanziya	see bìná, yìŋ bìná, yò bìná. tree used to make charcoal <i>Prosopis africana</i> (Guill. & Perr.) Taub.
nargbuŋbaŋ nazu	nargbuŋbama	grass sp. used in weaving gbala mats. West African black pepper <i>Piper guineense</i> Schum. & Thonn.
nèè	nèhì	tree <i>Pterocarpus erinaceus</i> Poir.
neeŋahaba		also sagbe tree <i>Pterocarpus santalinoides</i> LHer. ex DC.
nekyembilakosebegeoto nìmbòbàlgà	nìmbòbàlsi	<i>Uraria picta</i> (Jacq.) DC fruit or other product of dazuli (<i>Gardenia erubescens</i>)
nòbìlnìni	nòbìlnìnà	shrub with small, red edible fruits eaten by children et. ‘chick’s eye’ referring to the interior of the fruit
nólóyú kámli		wild garden-egg with thorns, not eaten <i>Solanum sp.</i>
nóónìni	nóónìnà	et. ‘cock’s garden-egg’ shrub with edible fruits. et. ‘hen’s eye’ see nòbìlnìni
nòòmà bíhi¹lì		<i>Euphorbia hirta</i> L. et. hen’s breast’ see ŋmání má bíhili
ŋ		
ŋàmpòò	ŋàmpòhi	tree with a light bark. <i>Bridelia sp.</i>
ŋàrìŋà	ŋàrìnsì	black berry, black plum tree fruits of this tree <i>Vitex doniana</i> Sweet and <i>Vitex grandifolia</i> The fruits are eaten and also boiled to make a sweet drink. The young leaves can be cooked in soup. Muslims make ink from the leaves. The bark is boiled and added to acid water from ash and rubbed on a sore head. A cure can be expected in three days.
ŋònsúrí	ŋònsura	shrub; the leaves of which are used as medicine for diarrhoea. <i>Pupalia lappacea</i> (L.) Juss (Amaranthaceae) <i>Gomphrena celosoides</i> Mart (Amaranthaceae) See also loosule

Singular	Plural	Gloss
ŋM		
ŋmaaŋa gumboɣri	?	An erect herb or small shrub. Has the same properties as gumboɣri but is considered to be of lesser quality.
ŋmaaŋa sinsabga ŋmááŋnǐ́ káyú	ŋmaaŋa sinsabsi	edible berries resembling sinsabga grass used for thatching <i>Panicum fluviicola</i> The fluff can fall in your eye and be quite painful. et. 'monkey's eye lashes'
ŋmanchee ŋmaŋgbee		small shrub calabash plant (a climber) used to make ladles Proverb: ŋmaŋgbee din koŋ tia din luri gbirgbiri If it has no tree to climb on, it falls miserably (and only produces small, useless calabashes). Said of an orphan (or of an old man without children).
ŋmání má bíhìlì	ŋmání má bíhìhà	plant with a white sap <i>Euphorbia hirta</i> L. et. 'dove mother's breast'. Used for children's medicines
ŋmanzugulaa ŋmeliŋmee	ŋmanzugulahi ŋmeliŋmehi	plant used to cure skin rash called ŋmali . flower.
NY		
nyaŋi		tree <i>Acacia hockii</i> De Willd. also worfaa, zaŋgurum
nyèrkóbgà	nyèrkóbsì	plant with many bulbs used as an aphrodisiac <i>Vernonia guineensis</i> Benth., vars. This can be shortened to nyèrkówà although the plural remains the same
nyevìlpohìlì	nyevìlpoha	plant with smaller leaves resembling the ?? whistle plant.
nyímsìlì	nyímsà	neem <i>Azadirachta indica</i> Twigs used as chewsticks. Oil from the seeds is used to preserve stored crops.
nyòmsìlì	nyòmsá	lime <i>Citrus aurantifolia</i> (Christm.)
nyòdálì	nyòdáyá	tree resembling nyòò roots and leaves used to bathe children
nyòò	nyòhì	copaiba balsam tree <i>Daniellia oliveri</i> (Rolfe) Hutch. and Dalz. Women used this as a chewstick. Known as good firewood. The roots are boiled and drunk as a palliative for a hernia.

Singular	Plural	Gloss
nyulinyima		basil <i>Ocimum basilicum</i>
P.		
pàɣ`vièliyù ku'shìhì kôm	—	<i>Marantochloa cuspidata</i> (Rosc.) Milne-Redhead et. 'woman's bucket [?] does not touch water' referring to the fact that if you dip the leaves in water they do not become soaked
pàkúrgú nyíndáá	pàkúrgú nyíndáhí	creeper with three-pronged thorns that are a frequent source of bicycle punctures et. 'witch-tooth'
pàkúrgú pyele pálgá	pàkúrgú pyele pálsí	<i>Scleria naumanniana</i> shrub The roots are used to make lineament, known locally as 'Omega oil'. The branches are used for roofing
pàṅdàm	—	<i>Gladiolus</i> sp. The name means 'cricket's pito' and is proverbial for strange behaviour. Thus: A nyula pàṅdàm yoyu? Do you drink cricket's pito? i.e. are you not acting strangely?
pàrúṅnútalí piéyú nyémàrì	pàrúṅnútáyá —	medicinal grass used for horses. plant from which string is made <i>Urena lobata</i> et. 'sheep's mucus'
piélaálóm	piélaálómá	<i>Aristida kerstingii</i> Pilger et. 'ram's beard'
pìrìmpìèlgú	pìrìmpìèlà	tall grass used to make gbala mats <i>Andropogon gayanus</i> Kunth.
pìrìṅkpáṅ	pìrìṅkpáná	spear grass (W.D.) <i>Imperata cylindrica</i> Also puluṅkpaṅ . This plant is very dangerous to farmers and can easily poke out your eye.
poloponkore poluole maani	poluole maana	<i>Melochia corchorifolia</i> <i>Aneilema mertonii</i> Brenan (Commelinaceae) et. frog + okra
púhúgá	púhísí	tamarind <i>Tamarindus indica</i> Linn. The fruits are cured, dried and made into balls for sale, used as a purgative and for cleaning brass utensils.
pùhù wúnì	pùrì wúnà	winter thorn tree <i>Faidherbia albida</i> (Del.) A Chev. et. 'put out leaves [in the] dry season'
pùlùmpǔṅ	pùlùmpùná	tree sp. <i>Sterculia setigera</i> Del.

Singular	Plural	Gloss
		The fruits and stem are burnt to make ash used in bochaa and soap. The fresh leaves drive away lice from poultry.
púmpónchíà	púmpónchíhì	shrub and its edible fruit <i>Strychnos spinosa</i> Lam.
púútársàli	púútársàlà	Also gìngàtiá shrub sp. used to mark farm boundaries
S.		
sáá	sáhí	grass used to bind together other grasses in mats etc. <i>Sporobolus subglobosus</i> A. Chev.
sààbìrli	sáábrá	Also nausaa 'wild kenaf' <i>Hibiscus</i> sp.
sáápiríwá	—	et. rain + kenaf leaves of edible shrub with light pink flowers, used in soup.
sááyámbúli	sááyámbúyà	small plant, sensitive to the touch. <i>Phyllanthus pentandrus</i>
sálinvógú	sálinvóri	et. rain + come + beat + you. The children sing ' saa kana, saa kana // kpabmaa son ' 'rain is coming, rain is coming // roll your mat' and then touch the leaves.
sambaŋ kana		herb frequently used in soup, sometimes planted in the farm <i>Corchorus aestuans</i> L.
sámpééŋá	sámpéénsí	the seeds are called sálinvózi
sàŋkáŋlè	sàŋkáŋá	Small herb with yellow flowers used as a broom ? <i>Sida acreta</i>
sàŋkpántiégù	sàŋkpántièrè	Also bulasam <i>Crossopteryx febrifuga</i>
sàwèní	sàwèná	shrub <i>Physalis angulata</i> L.
selem vɔɔɔ		tree whose roots are used as a remedy for crawcraw or scabies.
shèyù	shèrì	shrub bowstring hemp <i>Sansevieria liberica</i> Gér. & Labr.
shii		<i>Hydrolea palustris</i> tree <i>Mitragyna inermis</i> (Willd.) O. Ktze. also yokaŋalaŋga [=yookaŋga] . The branches are strong and insect-resistant and so are used for roofing. The fibre is used to weave baskets. The leaves are used for animal fodder.
		tree like a silver birch. The branches are used for rafters

Singular	Plural	Gloss
shìyà	shìhì	tree <i>Anogeissus leiocarpus</i> (DC.) Guill. & Perr. The leaves, together with korli are used to treat diarrhoea
shìm shindazugu	shimá shindazugri	<i>Indigofera</i> sp. physic nut <i>Jatropha curcas</i> False castor oil plant, used for hedges; leaves are used for dressing guinea-worm swellings. The twigs are used as chewsticks.
silimün tikpùlákùm		tree, recently introduced <i>Cassia</i> sp.
sìmbòglá sìnsàbgà	— sìnsàbsì	see wòrsímí tree with edible fruits <i>Lannea acida</i> A. Rich. The leaves are used to feed animals. Boiled roots are used to make a fluid to seal floors and walls. The roots are used to make a rope. The bark is used to make a medicine for children with sores on the stomach or anus.
sìnsàgbétilgà	sìnsàgbétilsì	trees of the <i>Lannea</i> group <i>Lannea barteri</i> (Oliv.) Engl. or <i>Lannea nigritana</i> (Sc. Elliot) Keay
sìnsàbli sìnsàbpiègù	sìnsàbà sìnsàbpièrì	fruit of sìnsàbgà (<i>Lannea acida</i>) tree <i>Lannea velutina</i> A. Rich
síyírìli	síyírà	tree <i>Pseudocedrela kotschy</i> (Schweinf.) Harms
sòyláhígú sòylákábgá	sòyláhísí sòyláhíbsí	small tree wild plant with small edible brown berries <i>Eugenia subherbacea</i> A. Chev. <i>Fadogia agrestis</i> Schweinf.
soko tiyo sòsó	sòsó	<i>Echinocloa obtusiflora</i> loofah <i>Luffa cylindrica</i> (Linn.) M.J. Roem. < H. Sold in the market as a bathing sponge
sùín súsúy'rà	— súsúríli	horse grass. <i>Securinega virosa</i> (Roxb.) Baill.
T.		
tááni táánjà	támá táánsì	shea fruit shea tree <i>Vitellaria paradoxa</i> Also see under kpííjà
tàbà dúgù nyûrgú	~ nyûrsí	<i>Aeschynome afraspera</i> J. Leonard et. tobacco + pipe + smokable. Children use the stems

Singular	Plural	Gloss
tàyimá tákpárigá lóòrì	—	to pretend to smoke any grass used as bedding for animals <i>Cochlospermum planchonii</i> Hook. f (Cochlospermaceae)
tàṅkòrò	tàṅkòrtì	false yam <i>Icacina senegalensis</i> A. Juss. or <i>I. oliviformis</i> ? Its presence is regarded as a good indicator for the successful yam cultivation, although the tuber is not eaten as it is elsewhere in Africa.
tàṅkórìgbàli tàntéé	— tàntéhi	tuber of tàṅkòrò short grass, particularly good for grazing. Found close to the house
tàṅjìbga	tàṅjìbsì	tree with a scarlet blossom whose roots are made into a sponge used to wash corpses <i>Erythrina senegalensis</i> DC acc. to CIPSEG
táringúli	táringúyà	herb whose corm or tuber is used for medicine <i>Curculigo pilosa</i> (Schum. & Thonn.) Engl. et. 'simple man's cola'. Also kòrìnchí But also defined as: tree, the twigs of which are chewed.
tìá tìbéé	tìhí tìbéhí	tree, shrub, epiphyte (general term) general term for all trees, such as gaa , tua and nyoo , believed to shelter spirits
tìkùbláákù m pierli		<i>Cassia obtusifolia</i> L. Also kùndùṅ bógólé
tìkùbláákù m sabinle tìṅkpám	tìṅkpámá	<i>Cassia occidentalis</i> L. shrub with white leaves and flowers et. 'ground-oil' The oily tuber is boiled up to make medicine for waist pains and impotence. probably <i>Sesbania sesban</i> (Linn.) Merrill
tìpièlgá	tìpièlsí	leguminous tree with a mass of mauve blossoms. <i>Stereospermum kunthianum</i> Cham. see zúgúbétiá
tìtáblí	tìtábà	general term to describe the entwining of two different species of trees or herbs
tìzòó	tìzòhí	parasite, mistletoe Perhaps generic for these plants. Proverb: tìzòó ku zin tiṅa mistletoe never sits on the ground i.e we are all naturally gregarious <i>Tapinanthus heteromorphus</i> (A. Rich.) Danser
tohabagìṅgu	tohabagìma or tohabagìnsi	shrub or small tree used for medicine <i>Bauhinia rufescens</i> Lam.
toli bindi tùá	tùhí	<i>Melanthera scandens</i> baobab <i>Adansonia digitata</i> The leaves are eaten in soup, the flesh of the pods can be eaten and the seeds can be roasted and made into a paste for flavouring.
tùyú	tùrí	baobab pod

Singular	Plural	Gloss
tùchí	—	gall on baobab tree
tùkáyú	tùkárí	fresh baobab leaves used for soup.
tùkáríkúmá	—	dried and pounded baobab leaves
tùkpílli	tùkpílà	baobab seeds cf. tùá
V.		
va'bgà	va'bsì	red-flowered silk-cotton tree <i>Bombax buonopozense</i> P. Beauv. The lint is collected for pillows and the leaves cut to feed animals. The mistletoe growing on this tree has important magical uses, being included in a medicine used to start quarrels in the household. Farmers do not like to cultivate under it because the land is infertile. The bark is burnt to make a smoke that drives away alizini spirits. The thorns are burnt and the charcoal resulting is mixed with butter to treat a swollen body. The dried gum is used for scent.
vàvàyí	—	<i>Trianthema portulacastrum</i> plant with soft leaves that lies on the ground, found around compounds, eaten by insects
W.		
wàlápùgú	wàlápùrí	Shrub growing on exhausted land whose roots are used as medicine. The latex is used to sour milk when making cheese. <i>Calotropis procera</i> (Ait.) Ait. f.
wáli	wálà	generic term for fruit
wàrfáá		<i>Acacia dudgeoni</i> Craib Also góóziê
wàrpálúgú	—	Small herb with large leaves that stick to clothing. Can be used as horse-fodder.
wáwá	—	climbing plant <i>Cyphostemma adenocaulis</i>
wóbsíli	wóbsà	<i>Cissus gracilis</i> shrub used for sweeping the floor. Used in children's medicine
wóbtíá	wóbtíhì	? <i>Kigelia africana</i> literally 'elephant tree'. Also làngàndìlì
wòymòyù	wòymòrì	vine whose leaves are boiled to cure convulsions in children
wokpane		<i>Monechma ciliatum</i>
wòlfáá	wòlfáhí	thorn tree with light wood used by carpenters for

Singular	Plural	Gloss
		door-frames and to carve walking-sticks. The trees can form a tangled thicket on abandoned farms <i>Acacia gourmaensis</i> A. Chev. <i>Acacia hockii</i> De Willd. Also nyaŋi, záŋgúrúm
wòrkárwáná	wòrkárwáni	horse grass. see yihim et. ‘horse maize’
wòrsímlí	wòrsímá	herbs growing on waste land, often stored as hay for horses and commonly eaten by sheep et. ‘horse groundnut’. Also simbòglá <i>Zornia glochidiata</i> Reichb. and <i>Alysicarpus ovalifolius</i> (Schum. & Thon.) J Léonard
wùblím		striga witchweed <i>Striga hermonthea</i> (Del.) Benth. and probably other spp. such as <i>S. brachycalyx</i> a weed on guinea corn of major economic importance. Also bòcháá
wúúnliyri	—	small herb of waste land and wet places <i>Pandiaka involucrata</i> (Moq) Hook f. (Amaranthaceae) et. ‘dry season money’. A month after the rains cease it produces abundant white flowers and is taken as a signal there will be no more rain.
Y.		
yábgà	yábsi	plant from which arrow-poison is made. <i>Strophanthus hispidus</i>
yihím	yihímá	grass sp. fed to horses. <i>Setaria pallide fusca</i> (Schumach.) Stapf & C.E. Hubbard Also given as <i>Sorghum arundinaceum</i> (Desv.) Stapf. and <i>Ischaemum rugosum</i>
yinyàŋ	—	grass that can be a weed of ricefields <i>Rottboelia cochinchinensis</i> (Lour.) WD Clayton
yìŋ bìná		sedge with fragrant rhizome <i>Cyperus articulatus</i> Linn. see bìná, nansagti kpirli . This is the type planted around the house. The powerful smell is intended to repel evil spirits.
yírígínlí	yírígímá	plant with a bulbous root that can be eaten raw as medicine. The sap may be expressed from the tuber as medicine.
yò bìná	—	sedge with fragrant rhizome <i>Cyperus articulatus</i> Linn. see bìná, nansagti kpirli . This is the type growing in the bush as opposed to yìŋ bìná (q.v.).

Roger Blench	Dagomba plant names and uses	Circulation version
Singular	Plural	Gloss
yògrlí	yògrá	Creeper whose fruits are used for tanning leather ? <i>Adenopus breviflorus</i>
yokayalaŋga	yokayalansi	tree <i>Mitragyna inermis</i> (Willd.) O. Ktze. hardy wood roots used for medicine. The wood burns very fiercely on the fire also sámpééŋá
yókpa'lí	yókpa'lá	shrub with edible fruit <i>Securidaca longepedunculata</i> Fres. similar to kpalga
yòlgá	yòlsí	tree used by beer brewers <i>Grewia mollis</i> Juss.
yo naazuwa		<i>Allophylus africanus</i> P. de Beauv. et. 'bush-pepper'
yòtùŋá	yòtùnsí	vine with large leaves <i>Cissus palmatifida</i> (Bak.) Planch (Ampelidaceae)
yúlèŋgá tábéle yùríŋà	yúlèŋgá tábéla yùrínsì	<i>Combretum nigricans</i> Lepr. ex Guill. & Perr. shrub <i>Combretum cinereipetalum</i> ssp. <i>geitonophyllum</i> (Diels) Okafor and <i>Combretum molle</i> R. Br. ex G. Don used to make yam-sticks and for firewood
yùríŋ kòŋà	yùríŋ kòŋsì	shrub. <i>Combretum</i> sp. et. 'leper's <i>Combretum</i> '. Used for firewood. The roots are ground and applied to sores.
Z.		
zààŋkùŋá	zààŋkùnsí	tree with very brittle wood which can throw off dangerous splinters <i>Ficus</i> sp.
zàbligá	zàblísí	henna <i>Lawsonia inermis</i> L. often grown by women and used as a hedge-plant in farms
záhíŋkólóyù	záhíŋkólórí	grass sp. used for roofing. <i>Hyparrhenia rufa</i>
zálínzáá	zálínzáhí	grass sp. like balimbini <i>Indigofera</i> sp. acc. to CIPSEG
zàŋkùgá	zàŋkùŋsì	African wild cherry tree and fruits <i>Ximenia americana</i> Linn.
záŋgúrúm	záŋgúrúmá	<i>Acacia hockii</i> De Wild. see wòlfáá
zàrlí	—	<i>Anchomanes welwitschii</i> Rendle
zòkúyá	—	moss used to dress sores on cows and sheep
zòlínli	zòlímà	climber of the mulberry family yielding a coarse fibre, used in dressing sores.
zòlkùrígù	zòlkùrà	<i>Entada africana</i> Guill. & Perr.

Singular	Plural	Gloss
		also chínchéèṅà see náɣnyóóntíà
zòmíá zúgúbétiâ	zòmíhí zúgúbétihi	parasite that lies over a tree without visible attachment tree producing profuse mauve and pink blossoms in the dry season; the roots are used to treat gonorrhoea. This tree is generally considered to be the abode of the kpukparsí sprites and thus it is forbidden to cut it for firewood. The wood should never be brought to the house, though fallen branches can be used to roast food in the farm. <i>Stereospermum kunthianum</i> Cham.
zùṅgúlí kúkuà	zùṅgúlí kúkùhì	Also tìpièlgá jujube tree
zúúṅkwîn	—	see náɣtípchèrigà hard locust (dawadawa) seed, that has not softened in boiling.
zúúni	zúná	dry seeds of the locust (dawadawa) pods.
3		
zègólì	zègóyá	tree sp. whose roots are used as a medicine <i>Maytenus senegalensis</i> (Lam.) Exell (Celastraceae)
zìnyùrìgù	zìnyùrsì	haemorrhage plant creeping weed used to staunch blood flows. et. ‘blood + drinker’ <i>Aspilia africana</i> (Pers) C.D. Adams But UPTWA, II,IV gives <i>Portulaca foliosa</i>
QUERIES		
agbadudu [?]		leaves of an edible shrub with light pink flowers, used in soup. also sààpìrèwà
aneta		<i>Croton lobatus</i>
bakpa		<i>Elaeis guineensis</i>
balinyiri [?]		thistles of the <i>Centaurea</i> group
bamrog		ditch millet <i>Paspalum scrobiculatum</i> Linn.
biyebingira		Bitterleaf <i>Vernonia colorata</i> (Willd.) Drake
biyengawu		<i>Ampelocissus bombycina</i> (Amaryllidaceae)
boboroa		An annual herb growing on waste ground, occasionally cultivated. The leaves are eaten in a sauce. Green amaranth <i>Amaranthus viridis</i> Linn.
boṅ kapala		tree <i>Parinari curatellifolia</i> Planch. Also papalatutubu
buruguni		shrubs of the <i>Tephrosia</i> group sometimes used as fish-poisons <i>Tephrosia flexuosa</i> G Don, <i>T. platycarpa</i> Guil. & Perr.
dalaṅgbini		?

Singular	Plural	Gloss
dandoŋgunle		<i>Mollugo nudicaulis</i> Lam.
deborisaa		<i>Aspilia africana</i> (Pers) C.D. Adams
diesima		<i>Commelina africana</i> (L.) Also fulumfulaa
duo ngeman		<i>Hyptis suaveolens</i> Poit.
gundosollo		yam bean <i>Sphenostylis stenocarpa</i> (Hochst. ex A Rich.) Harms
hunglade		annual herb <i>Monechma ciliatum</i> (Jacq.) MilneRedhead
jehi		raffia also kpari
jeŋgbiringa	jeŋgbirinsi	tree with edible fruits
kpalaja	kpala	tree <i>Azelia Africana</i> Sm. also kpanguli
krosima		tree <i>Cynometra vogelii</i> Hook. f.
kulkpalsogo		
kulu dirigo		vine with edible fruits <i>Saba</i> sp.
kumdandar		<i>Borreria radiata</i> DC
larapiri		tree <i>Maranthes polyandra</i> (Benth.) Prance
lér'gínlí	lérgúmá	?
leŋgerigoŋgo		tree <i>Stereospermum kunthianum</i> Cham.
namihyi tanguwa		<i>Ludwigia hyssopifolia</i> (G Don) Exell
nanzido		tree <i>Amblygonocarpus andongensis</i> (Oliv.) Exell & Torre
narga		tree African myrrh <i>Commiphora africana</i> (A. Rich.) Engl. var. <i>africana</i>
nchendua		woody herb. The plant is boiled, mixed with peppers and used as a vaginal douche in the later stages of pregnancy to ease childbirth pains. <i>Asystasia gangetica</i> (Linn.) T. Anders.
ŋodolega		liana <i>Dalbergia saxatilis</i> Hook. f.
ŋgurun		shrub or small tree marabou thorn <i>Dichrostachys cinerea</i> (Linn.) Wight & Arn.
nyera		<i>Acacia macrostachya</i> Reichenb. ex Benth. also garinyini
nyírgínlí	nyírgúmá	?
pagretega		<i>Marantochloa cuspidata</i> (Rosc.) Milne Redhead Also kushihi kom
pampiga		herb with woody stem <i>Excoecaria grahamii</i> Stapf or <i>Sapium grahamii</i> Prain
papalatutubu		tree <i>Parinari curatellifolia</i> Planch. Also boŋ kapala
powanyakruga zuperi		annual herb growing on waste ground <i>Pandiaka heudelotii</i> (Moq.) Hook f. Also barimbini
sagbe		tree <i>Pterocarpus erinaceus</i> Poir.
sansaŋwa		thorny shrub <i>Capparis tomentosa</i> Lam.
sumbie		<i>Heeria insignis</i> (Del.) O. Ktze (Anacardiaceae)
tachale		tree <i>Combretum</i> spp. inc. <i>Combretum fragrans</i> F. Hoffman
tauai		herb or shrub used for indigo dye <i>Indigofera</i> sp.
trindobaga		shrub used for chewsticks <i>Eriosema griseum</i> Bak.
ukpali		Trailing plant <i>Ipomoea argentaurata</i> Hallier f.

Singular	Plural	Gloss
ulaṅkwana		tree with edible fruit <i>Annona senegalensis</i> Pers.
worbaṅli		wild beans, used for feeding horses.
wookpargu		<i>Desmodium gangeticum</i> (L.) DC Also yolega
yokharaugu		shrub and edible <i>Strychnos</i> fruit <i>Strychnos spinosa</i> Lam.
zuguli koṅa		tree <i>Entada africana</i> Guill. & Perr.