

**Traditional Medicinal Plants Used by Hausa Tribe of Kano State of Nigeria**

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**INTRODUCTION**

Herbalism is the ancient approach to healing and curing of human ailments in Kano State of Nigeria. In spite of the available allopathic medical facilities, the inhabitants of rural areas continue to practice the native medicine. This might be due to (i) availability of diverse vegetation and (ii) the treasure of knowledge of medicinal plants possessed by traditional healers. This knowledge might either have been passed on to them by their elders or is based on exclusive experience. The traditional healers in the area include herbalists (Mai Maganin-Gargajiya), bonesetters (Madori), women birth attendants (Ungozoma) and spiritual healers (Boka). Among all, the herbalists are the only traditional healers using herbs in their treatment.

Kano State is one of the highly populated areas of Nigeria, occupying an area of 43,000 km<sup>2</sup> between approximately 13°, 03'N and 10°, 33'E on the northern plateau of Northern Nigeria. The area lies chiefly in the Sudan savanna zone inhabited mainly by Hausa tribe.

A considerable amount of literature is now available on the traditional medicinal plants and lists of medicinal plants have been published for many countries. In Nigeria our knowledge about the traditional medicinal plants is available through the work of Akpata (1979), Lambo (1979), Mume (1976), Odebiyi & Sofowora (1978, 79), Oliver (1960) & Sofowora (1982). However, no information is available on the folk medicinal plants used by Hausa people. The present paper reports the results of a survey of traditional medicinal plants of Kano State carried out during the years 1986-87. The voucher specimens are kept in the Herbarium, Bayero University, Kano.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

Traditional healers (mainly herbalists) in different local government areas were interviewed regarding the plants used by them in folk medicine. One of the problems encountered during the study was the language problem. However, this was overcome by seeking help of an interpreter. During the interview specific questions were asked following the format given by Sofowora (1982) and the information was noted. The medicinal plants were collected and identified using Flora of West Tropical Africa (Hutchinson & Dalziel, 1954-72).

## PLANTS AND THEIR TRADITIONAL MEDICINAL USES.

The following medicinal plants are arranged alphabetically by family, genus and species. The traditional Hausa names are written in parenthesis.

X **Acanthaceae**

*Nelsonia canescens* (Lam.) Spreng. (Tsamiya-makiyaya)

The entire plant is boiled and the decoction is taken as a vermifuge (tapeworm).

X **Anacardiaceae**

*Sclerocarya birrea* (A. Rich.) Hochst. (Danya)

Bark decoction with milk is used for the treatment of diarrhoea and piles.

*hemor.*

X **Ampelidaceae**

*Cissus populnea* Guill & Perr. (Malaiduwa)

Leaves are boiled in water and taken for the treatment of stomach ulcer.

X **Annonaceae**

*Annona senegalensis* L. (Gwander jeji)

Root decoction is taken for weakness called Hyneia. Latex and stem bark (ground) applied to wounds.

**Asclepiadaceae**

*Carallium dalzielii* N.E.Br. (Karan-masalachi)

The plant is chewed or the extract is applied for the treatment of chest pain (pneumonia), locally called marji.

X **Calotropis procera** (Ait.) Ait.f. (Tumtapaya)

Leaf decoction along with latex is used as a vermifuge.

X **Leptadenia hastata** (Pers.) Deene (Yadiya)

Leaf decoction is used to ease labour, Latex is used for ringworm and scorpion bite, and pounded leaves for back pain.

*Leigne*

X **Bignoniaceae**

*Stereospermum kunthianum* Cham. (Sansami)

Bark decoction is used for the treatment of yellow fever.

X **Burseraceae**

*Commiphora africana* (A. Rich.) Engl. (Dashi)

Leaf extract in water is used for toothache.

X **Caricaceae**

*Carica papaya* L. (Gwanda)

Leaf decoction is used for the treatment of yellow fever. Dried leaves are used for stomach problems and juice of roots is used with salt for abortion.

X **Celastraceae**

*Maytenus senegalensis* (Lam.) (Namiyon)

The bark decoction is used for the treatment of gonorrhea.

**Compositae**

*Centaurea perrottetii* DC (Dayi)

Leaf decoction is used for stomach trouble.

X **Vernonia amygdalina** Del. (Shiwaka)

Pounded leaves are taken for the treatment of stomach problems.

- Combretaceae**
- X *Anogeissus leiocarpus* (DC) Guill & Perr. (Marike)  
Decoction of stem bark with potash is used for stomach problems and cough.
- X *Guiera senegalensis* J.F. Gmel. (Sabara)  
Powdered roots applied for the treatment of malignancy (Daji in Hausa). Ground leaves with water are taken for diarrhea and stomach problems. *me'chanceto*  
*ma'weillawo*
- X *Terminalia macroptera* Guill & Perr. (Kwandari)  
Roots decoction is used for stomach problems. *(med. very few a d'i maladi)*
- Cochlospermaceae**
- X *Cochlospermum tinctorium* A. Rich. (Rawaya)  
Decoction of roots and stem bark is used for yellow fever.
- Convolvulaceae**
- X *Ipomoea asarifolia* (Desr.) Roem & Schult. (Duman rafi)  
The decoction of the entire plant is taken for boils and stomach problems.
- Cucurbitaceae** *furuncles*
- X *Cucurbita pepo* DC (Kabewa)  
Paste of pounded stem is applied for the treatment of skin disease locally called Tan-tan.
- Luffa aegyptiaca* Mill (Soso)  
Grounded leaves are applied for swollen body due to cold (i.e. antiallergic).
- X *Momordica charantia* L. (Garrafuri) Leaf decoction is used as vermifuge and treatment of malaria.
- Ebenaceae**
- X *Diospyros mespiliformis* Hochst ex A. DC (Kanyan)  
Decoction of dried fruits used for mouth wash and boils.
- Euphorbiaceae**
- X *Euphorbia hirta* L. (Nonon-kurchiya)  
Leaf decoction is used for ringworm and latex for scorpion sting.
- X *Jatropha curcas* L. (Birida zugu)  
Latex is used for toothache. Boiled roots are eaten to cure gonorrhoea.
- Gramineae**
- X *Pennisetum pedicellatum* Trin (Kansuwa)  
Leaves are (paste form) used for cuts and fresh wounds.
- Labiatae**
- X *Leucas martinicensis* (Jacq.). Ait. F. (Kam barawu)  
Entire plant is boiled in water and the decoction is used for abortion.
- Leguminosae**
- X *Acacia albida* Del. (Gawo)  
Decoction of leaves and fruits is used for leprosy and bark decoction for scabies. *g-a-b.*
- A. ataxacantha* DC (Gbarnwar kar)  
Decoction of leaves, bark and fruits is taken for yellow fever.
- A. polyacantha* Willd. subsp. *campylacantha* (Hochst) Brenan. (Karkar).  
Decoction of stem bark is used for mouth wash.

*Albizia chevalieri* Hans. (Katsari)

The mixture of ground leaves and butter is applied externally for the treatment of body swelling (oedema).

X *Alysicarpus rugosus* (Willd.) DC

Decoction of entire plant is taken for cough problems. Powdered of entire dried plants is taken for guinea worm problem locally called Kurkunu.

*Cassia arereh* Del. (Gama fada).

Infusion of roots is used for the treatment of jaundice.

X *C. italica* Lam. ex F.W. Andr. (Filasko)

Leaf decoction is taken as a remedy for cold and catarrh.

X *C. occidentalis* L. (Raidora)

Pounded leaves are applied for the treatment of rheumatism. Root decoction with potash is used for diarrhoea and infusion from seeds for heart diseases.

X *C. tora* (Mill.) L. (Tafasa)

Powdered dried leaves mixed with butter are applied externally for the treatment of arthritis.

X *Dichrostachys cinerea* (L.) W. & Arn. (Dundu)

Ground leaves are applied on cuts and wounds as antiseptic.

X *Entada africana* Guill & Perr. (Twatsa)

Powdered stem bark mixed with milk is taken for the treatment of diarrhoea.

X *Erythrina senegalensis* DC (Minjiriya)

Stem bark is soaked in water and taken for the treatment of yellow fever and tuberculosis.

X *Parkia biglobosa* (Jacq.) Benth. (Dorawa)

Powdered bark mixed with milk is used for diarrhoea and also applied externally for fire burn wounds.

X *Piliostigma thonningii* (Schum.) Mitne (Kargo)

Young buds and leaves are boiled and the liquid is used for eye wounds.

X *Sesbania sesban* (L.) Merril. (Zamorka)

The leaves and stem decoction with white potash is used for the treatment of yellow fever and tuberculosis.

X *Tamarindus indica* L. (Tsamiya)

Decoction of bark is used for the treatment of fever and for breast diseases in women locally called "goza". Pulp of the fruit is used for wound dressing.

X **Lythraceae**

*Lawsonia inermis* L. (Lalee)

Root is used for abortion and as an antiemetic.

X **Meliaceae**

*Khaya senegalensis* (Desv.) A. Juss. (Madaei)

Bark decoction is used as vermifuge, and leaf decoction is taken for cough.

X *Pseudocedrela kotschy* (Schweint.) Harms. (Juna)

Root decoction with red potash is used for stomach upset.

X **Menispermaceae**

*Cissampelos mucronata* A. Rich (Judarkar)

Powdered stem bark is applied for the treatment of finger diseases locally called kakkare (Widlow) and also for pelet disease in children locally called redans (Polio). Latex is used for founge boils.

#### Moraceae

*Ficus abutilifolia* (Miq.) Miq. (Yandi)

Leaves infusion is used to cure cold which results in body swelling and for curing mucous-producing eye diseases.

X *F. sycomorus* L. (Baure)

Root extract is consumed for the treatment of tuberculosis and latex as external ointment for ringworm.

X *F. thonningii* Blume (Chediya)

Latex is applied to cure ringworm; boiled leaves are eaten to cure yellow fever.

X **Moringaceae**

*Moringa oleifera* Lam. (Zogale)

Decoction of roots is taken to treat stomach problems and snake bite.

X **Nymphaeaceae**

*Nymphaea lotus* Willd.

Leaves and offset stem are ground and used for oedema.

#### Palmae

*Phoenix dactylifera* L.

Powdered roots along with potash applied to cure scabies.

#### Polygalaceae

X *Securidaca longepedunculata* Fres

Powder of leaves and branches is to be inhaled by patient<sup>3</sup> suffering from mental disorder and epilepsy. Powdered leaves with milk are taken for the treatment of a disease locally called sabari (tropical ulcer).

X **Rhamnaceae**

*Ziziphus mauritiana* Lam. (Magarya).

Root decoction taken for stomach problems.

X *Z. spina-cristi* L. (Kurna)

Ground leaves mixed with food are eaten by women for the cure of breast ulcer locally called Gorat<sup>4</sup>.

X **Rubiaceae**

*Feretia apodanthera* Del. (Kurukuru)

Root decoction is useful for stomach upset.

*Mitracarpus scaber* Zucc. (Gogomasu)

Decoction of entire plant is used for the treatment of yellow fever and tuberculosis.

X *Nauclea latifolia* Sm. (Tajashiya)

Decoction of leaves and stem is used for yellow fever.

X **Sapotaceae**

*Butyrospermum paradoxum* (Gaertn. f.) Hepper (Kadanya)

Bark decoction is used to cure tuberculosis.

X **Solanaceae**

*Schwenkia americana* L. (Farfetsi)

Whole plant decoction is used to cure diarrhoea in young children.

**Sterculiaceae**X *Waltheria indica* L.

Decoction of stem and root is used for anal prolapse.

**Ulmaceae***Celtis integrifolia* Lam. (Zuwo)

Ground leaves are to be eaten to cure leprosy.

**Verbenaceae***Clerodendrum capitatum* (Willd.) Schum. & Thonn. var. *capitatum* (Mashey)

Root decoction is used to cure diarrhoea.

X *Vitex doniana* Sweet. (Dinya)

Stem bark decoction is taken to cure smallpox.

var. *petite doniana*X **Zygophyllaceae***Balanites aegyptiaca* Dal. (Aduwa)

Roots decoction is taken for general weakness.

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