

Ethnomedicinal study of *Adansonia digitata* L. in the commune of Cotonou

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1 ABSTRACT

Adansonia digitata L. is well-known to Beninese population for its therapeutic and nutritional virtues. This research emphasizes the need for using of *Adansonia* in the cure of diseases. We asked around herbalist and phytoterapists about the etchnomedicinal in Cotonou. In many areas of Cotonou, some people frequently use the plant to treat or to cure some illnesses or diseases. Herbalists' and phytoterapists' knowledge of medicinal plants was assessed. Means of obtaining medicinal plants include purchasing, harvesting, ordering and cultivation. The main sources of supply are markets, fields, gardens, homes, forests and streets. Common medicinal plants include *Adansonia digitata*, *Carica papaya*, and *Crateva adansonii*. Herbalist and phytoterapist respondents share a high level of empirical knowledge, underlining the importance of these plants in local phytotherapy. Herbalist and phytoterapist respondents attributed a variety of uses to *Adansonia digitata*, grouped into categories such as biological, therapeutic, food, medicinal and ornamental. The therapeutic level is particularly emphasized, with *A. digitata* considered to be very important and used in some twenty medicinal uses to prevent or cure various common illnesses. The plant has some twenty known medicinal properties, used in medicinal preparations involving all its plant organs. Routes of administration and methods of use vary, illustrating the diversity of approaches to using this plant in local phytotherapy.