



## Traditional uses of woody plants by a major ethnic group of Southern Cameroon

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### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** Millions of people depend directly on forest resources to meet their nutritional, medicinal and energy needs. The aim of this study was to highlight usefully species in the habits of the Bulus ethnic group in the coastal region of Cameroon.

**Methodology and results:** The work was carried out in four villages, Ethnobotanical surveys based on stratified probability sampling of 100 individuals was use as the sampling method. The survey of local residents identified 64 species divided into 60 genera and 32 families. *Irvingia gabonensis* (Ando'o) (115 citations) was the most cited species for Food use, while *Alstonia boonei* (Ekouk) (102 citations), *Pterocarpus soyauxii* (Mbe) (20 citations), and *Guibourtia tessmanii* (Oveng) (19 citations) were respectively the most cited species for the Medical, Service, and Magico-spiritual uses. The highest Ethnobotanical Usage Values were obtained for *Alstonia boonei* (2.66), *Irvingia gabonensis* (2.57), and *Guibourtia tessmanii* (2.54).

**Conclusions and application of findings:** Ethnobotanical use value is an index that helps identify species of great interest. It was used to select useful species, particularly those with significant value. In this study, eight major species, including one endangered according to the IUCN status, were identified in the area. It is therefore appropriate to focus on the sustainable management of these NTFPs in order to meet not only the needs of the populations but also the conservation of biodiversity. These results can contribute to the promotion of indigenous knowledge; to the promotion of local products such as traditional medicines, food, service wood... and to the conservation of biodiversity.

**Key words:** Atlantic Forest, conservation, ethnobotanical survey, indigenous people, NTFP, use value