

# **An ethnobotanical survey on the traditional uses and medicinal perceptions for domesticated and wild gathered vegetables of the Lugbara Community in Arua District, Uganda**

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## **Abstract**

Vegetables are very important for human diet. Having a critical look at the vegetable consumption pattern in the current generation, there is a great decline in the consumption of both domesticated and wild vegetables yet the vegetables play a very great role in the body as far as their nutritional and medicinal values are concerned. But this indigenous knowledge seems to be disappearing due to changes in life style. Therefore this survey was done in 2013 in two sub counties to document the indigenous and introduced domesticated and wild vegetables, how they prepare and preserve them, the medicinal values they attached to them. Considering the roles women play in bringing food on the table, their involvement in maintaining the vegetables throughout the year in the rural settings and income generation activities, both men and women were interviewed. Of the individuals interviewed 15 (21%) were men while 45(79%) were women. The age of the respondents ranged from 15-87 years. The study was carried out in two villages; each village had a total of 35 respondents from randomly selected homesteads.

The study used both primary and secondary sources of data in both quantitative and qualitative methods. Results show that this community had a good number of indigenous and introduced domesticated and wild vegetables. Fifty six (56) vegetable species distributed in nine families were listed. Different preparation and preservation methods were documented. It was realized that communities preferred indigenous vegetables to the introduced and knew about the nutritive and medicinal values of the vegetables. Also noted was the decreased knowledge of the wild vegetables and also medicinal attributes in the younger generation compared to the elderly. Collection or maintenance of the vegetables and cooking was mainly done by women. This information will be used to increase awareness in the communities for improved health through vegetarian diets and also promotion of these vegetables in this community would improve their livelihoods.

**Keywords:** indigenous, knowledge, domesticated, wild –gathered, nutrition, health