SPONTANEOUS PLANTS USED IN THE TRADITIONAL SOAPMAKING IN COTE D'IVOIRE

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ABSTRACT

The study focused on the spontaneous plants used in the traditional soapmaking. The aim is to create a directory of the main plant species used in traditional soapmaking in the Sudan savanna zone. An ethnobotanical investigation based on direct structured or semi-structured individual interviews was carried out with 193 people. 33 plants were recorded, among which 7 plants are used for the extraction of the fat and 28 for potash manufacture. The frequency of plant use, level of abundance plant and origin of each plant species were estimated.

At the end of the study, 33 plants were recorded and 22 are abundant in study zone. Carapa procera was used much and on the other hand ceiba pentandra, cussonia arborea, elaeis guineensis and vitellaria paradoxa were moderately used. 28 plants are spontaneous and 84 % of respondents reported their involvement in the traditional soapmaking. 7 plants were used for fat extraction while 28 plants species were use to potash manufacture. Stems and fruit were most requested as organs of plants for soapmaking.

The intensive use of the stem (trunk and branches) of these species is a real pressure on the resources itself and may lead to the extinction of the most vulnerable one. Plants inventoried were ranked according to their importance for the soap makers. Several types of plants were identified, from the most known, commonly used and abundant in the study site (*Carapa procera, Ceiba pentandra* and *Cussonia arborea*) to the least known, little used and scarce. The valorization of these resources can be beneficial to concerned population, it is urgent to adopt a sustainable management approach for the preservation of the used species. So, 3 plants species (*C. procera, P. butyracea* and *C. arborea*) were proposed for possible revalorization.

Keywords: Côte d'Ivoire, Plants, Soap, Sudan Savanna.

1. INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, the preparation of soap is made from crude palm oil and potash extracted from wood ashes [1]. In Europe, before the development of the soap factory, the Gauls and Romans were also making soap at home [2]. In Africa, despite progress in the soap industry, people are still using soap made traditionally, which remains cheap and have specific virtues. In Ivory Coast, the manufacture of traditional soaps is widespread, based on the use of plant species which are mostly spontaneous. It therefore contributes to the vulnerability, the scarcity or even extinction of the concerned species. This practice can impact the local ecosystems and may lead to the extinction of the species [3].

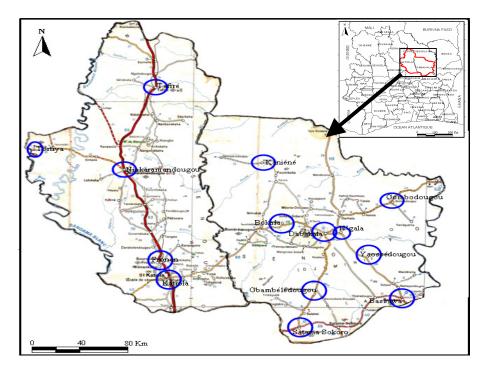
Presently, few are known about the involved species. The present study aims at creating a directory of the main species exploited in traditional soap making in the Center-North of Côte d'Ivoire (regions of Katiola and Dabakala) in order to insure an economical and ecological sustainable use of these materials.

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study site (regions of Katiola and Dabakala) is located in Center-North of Côte d'Ivoire. The climate is Sudanian with 1053.10 mm of rain per annum.

2.1. Ethnobotanical investigation

The study material is represented by an ethnobotanical investigation form developed after a pre-fieldwork. Fourteen localities were selected (Fig. 1) and the ethnobotanical investigation conducted among 193 people, was done through structured or semi-structured individual direct talks.



• Visited site



During the investigation, the informants were asked to answer questions from the survey form. Specimens of plants mentioned were collected with the help of informants for confirmation of the vernacular name and constitution of a reference collection. The determination of species (scientific name) was done at the National Center of Floristic (NCF) of the University of Cocody (Abidjan). The scientific names were also checked using the work of Lebrun and Stork [4-7].

The information collected on the survey forms were transferred into a database, processed and analyzed using Microsoft Office Excel 2003.

2.2. Estimated frequency of use and level of plants abundance

The frequency of **plant** species allows us to assess their level of knowledge and exploitation by the people. If use was estimated by the method of the open list ("free-listing") of **Cotton** [8]. This approach, based on the spontaneous citations, rests on the principle that the most significant species are mentioned by several informants and therefore obtain a high ranking. Frequency of use of each species has been evaluated by its citation frequency spontaneous, according to the following formula:

Frequency use of a plant =	Number of people identifying the plant	
	Number of questioned people	

The abundance level was estimated for each plant species inventoried by the ratio between the number of people recognizing its abundance in the study site and the total number of people identifying the plant:

Level of a plant abundance = Number of people recognizing the plant abundance in nature Number of people identifying the plant

2.3. Frequency of plant type

Following the same principle of Cotton [8], the frequency of the origin of each plant species (plant type) was calculated, according to whether the species of plant is cultivated, spontaneous or that it comes from a different region of our study site.

2.4. Statistical analysis

Data were subjected to analysis of variance (ANOVA) using the statistica 7.5 program. Significant differences among values were compared using Newman-Keuls test at 5 %. The means of phenolic compounds contents

3. RESULTS

3.1. Inventoried plants

At the end of the ethnobotanical investigation, thirty-three plants were recorded. These species were left again in thirty-one genera and twenty-one families (Table 1). According to reports, the traditional soapmaking requires two essential plant raw materials: the fat content (oil, butter) and potash, each coming from specific plant species.

	Vernacular names			
Scientific names	Tagbana	Djimini	ini Malinké (Djamala)	
Acacia polyacantha	Gronhon			
Albizia ferruginea			Samandêrê	
Albizia zygia	Dimakanhan			
Amaranthus spinosus	Noumrinhin			
Anogeissus leiocarpus	Nglaha, Guindihi	Nglaga	Krêkêtê,	
5	0	0 0	Tchêgbêlêyiri	
Berlinia grandiflora		Yaurfougo	Wôngbê	
0	Kakpaha	Krougbêguê	Gbohi, Gbohou, Kobi,	Kohndou
Carapa procera			Gbogo, Gbowi	
Ceiba pentandra	Sédihi, Kplaba	Séligué, Cheligué,	Banda, Bada	Nyin
		Segbêguê	,,	, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,
Cocos nucifera	Kpaco	Kpaco	Kpaco	
Coffea spp.	Café	Café	Café	
Cussonia arborea	Fitio, Foutchouhou,	Yémbetché.	Borokourou	
	Gbotoho	Dédégué, Tédégué		
Elaeis guineensis	Hèhètihi	Sindigué	Téhi	Mmé
Ficus capensis		Ndassaga	Toro, tro	
Ficus exasperata	Waha		,	
Gardenia ternifolia			Blé	
Jatropha curcas L.	Kapaha, Kahadja	Kapara	Pôrôpôrô	
	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·		Mangandawa-gbê	
Khaya senegalensis		Wêdigué	Diala	
Manihot esculenta		Gbéndé	Gbéndé	
Musa spp.		Blahnda	Barada	
Parkia biglobosa	Nindihi	Nindigué	Nèrè	
Pentadesma butyracea	Diréhé	Ndjéliqué	Gbêlèn	
Piliostigma thonningii	Yoganhan,	Yéwangan	Niaman	
· ····································	Yéganhan	, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,		
Pterocarpus erinaceus	Nagnranhan	Gbatèlguê	Gbin	
Pupalia lappacea		Sibagniguiré		
Ricinus communis L.		Tombotigui	Tombotigui	
Securidaca longepedunculata		Félibé	Djoro, Djohi	
Spondias mombin	Tônanhan	Monlimon	_]0.0, _]0	
Sorghum spp.	Gbodioho			
Terminalia glaucescens	Kohotihi, Kohoun	Koman		
Theobroma cacao	Cacao	Cacao	Cacao	
Vitellaria paradoxa	Lodihi, Lohodial,	Létigué	Kôrô, Kwèi, Sihé	
internal na paradona	Lokatchlé			
Vitex doniana	Hangonhon	Sandjo wôô	Koto	
Zanthoxylum zanthoxyloides		Nganhan	Ngôndô	

Table 1: Inventory of plants harvested in the regions of Katiola and Dabakala (Center-North of Côte d'Ivoire)

Tagbana, djimini, malinké and baoulé are local languages.

3.2. Plants and bodies used for fat extraction

Seven plants were used for the extraction of the fat content (oil or butter). They belong to five families and five genera (Table 2). The Arecaceae and Euphorbiaceae are the most famillies, each represented with two plant species. The organ used on these plants is always part of the fruit. It is the seed, almond, endosperm or fruit pulp. Two types of organ are used at *Elaeis guineensis*: pulp and almond.

Family	Species	Organ of the plant
Arecaceae	Cocos nucifera Linn.	Coconut endosperm)
	Elaeis guineensis Jacq.	Pulp, almond
Clusiaceae	Pentadesma butyracea Sab.	Seeds
Euphorbiaceae	Jatropha curcas Linn.	Almond
	Ricinus communis Linn.	Almond
Meliaceae	Carapa procera CD.	Seeds
Sapotaceae	Vitellaria paradoxa Gaertn.	Almond

Table 2. Plants used for fat extraction in regions of Katiola and Dabakala (Center-North of Côte d'Ivoire)

3.3. Plants and organs used for potash manufacture

Table 3 presents the twenty eight plants species for the manufacture of potash. They are divided into nineteen families and twenty six genera. Mimosaceae is the most exploited family with four species. Amaranthaceae, Caesalpiniaceae, Combretaceae, Euphorbiaceae, Moraceae and Rubiaceae families are each represented by two species plants. Among the organs harvested from these plants, the stems (trunk and branches) were largely requested. At the kapok (*Ceiba pentandra*), inside the trunk, the foothills and dried fruits are exploited by the population. Fruits and derivatives (pod, pod, pulp, skin) are also used. In *Amaranthus spinosus and Pupalia lappacea*, the entire aerial part of the plant (stems, leaves, fruit) is exploited.

3.4. Types of species used

Among the thirty five plants species inventoried, twenty eight plants are spontaneous (79 %), four plants come from other parts of Côted'Ivoire (12 %) and only three plants are cultivated in the region (9 %), Table 3.

The spontaneous plants were cited by 84 % of respondents while 15 % cited only plants from other regions of Côte d'Ivoire. Finally, a very small number of respondents (1 %) know the involvement of crops in the region in the traditional soapmaking (Fig. 2).

3.5. Frequency of use and abundance level of plants used for fat extraction

Figure 3 shows the frequency of use of oilseeds and their abundance level in the place. It appears that plants *Carapa procera* is the most used plant, with 79.48 % of the citations. The shea tree (*Vitellaria paradoxa*) and palm oil (*Elaeis guineensis*), with quotations respective 36.92 and 33.33 %, ranked second and third. Other plants species are very poorly known, with less than 4 % of the citations. Regarding the level of abundance, almost all oilseed species are very well represented in the site, according to informants. However, three trends emerged. First, plants that are very abundant with over 90 % level of abundance were *Jatropha curcas* (100 %), *Ricinus communis* (100 %) and *Vitellaria paradoxa* (90.27 %), with statistically identical level of abundance. Then, the fairly abundant plants (60-90 %) which are *E. guineensis* (73.84 %), *Carapa procera* (68.38 %) and *Cocos nucifera* (66.66 %). Only *Pentadesma butyracea* is not very abundant in the area with 33.33 % level of abundance.

3.6. Frequency of use and abundance level of plants species used for potash manufacture

Among the twenty eight plants identified for the manufacture of potash (Table 4), only two plants are distinguished (Fig. 4). These are *Ceiba pentandra* and *Cussonia arborea* with 51.28 % of all citations. The others twenty six plant species are very slightly mentioned (frequency <9%). Their abundance level, meanwhile, is very high (> 90 %) or high (50-90 %) for almost all inventoried plants.

Family	Species	Organ of the plant
Amaranthaceae	Amaranthus spinosus Linn.	Aerial part
	Pupalia lappacea (L.) A.Juss.	Aerial part
Anacardiaceae	Spondias mombin Linn.	Stems
Araliaceae	Cussonia arborea Hochst.ex A. Rich.	Stems
Arecaceae	Cocos nucifera Linn.	Fleshy fruit pulp
Bombacaceae	Ceiba pentandra (L.) Gaertn.	Trunk (buttress),
Dombacaceae		cockles
Casalpiniaaaaa	Berlinia grandiflora (Vahl) Hutch. et Dalz.	Pods (cockles)
Caesalpiniaceae	Piliostigma thonningii Milne Red.	Stem, fruits
Combratagoac	Anogeissus leiocarpus (DC.) Guill. et Perr.	Stems
Combretaceae	Terminalia glaucescens Planch. ex Benth.	Stems
Fundardiagoago	Jatropha curcas Linn.	Stems
Euphorbiaceae	Manihot esculenta Crantz.	Tuber peel
Fabaceae	Pterocarpus erinaceus Poir.	Stems
Meliaceae	Khaya senegalensis (Desr.) A.Juss.	Stems
	Acacia polyacantha var. campylacantha (Hochst.)	Stems
Mimosaceae	Roberty	
	Albizia ferruginea (Guill. et Perr.) Benth.	Stems
	Albizia zygia (CD.) J.F.Macbr.	Stems
	Parkia biglobosa (Jacq.) R.Br. ex G.Don	Stems
Moracoao	Ficus capensis Thunb.	Stems
Moraceae	Ficus exasperata Vahl	Stems
Musaceae	Musa spp.	Tuber peel
Poaceae	Sorghum spp.	Stems
Polygalaceae	Securidaca longepedunculata Fres.	Stems
Pubiacoac	Coffea spp.	Fruit pulp
Rubiaceae	Gardenia ternifolia Schum. et Thonn.	Stems
Rutaceae	Zanthoxylum zanthoxyloides (Lam.) Zep. et Tim.	Stems
Sterculiaceae	Theobroma cacao Linn.	Cockles (+ rachis)
Verbenaceae	Vitex doniana Sweet.	Stems

Table 3. Plants used for the potash manufacture in the regions of Katiola and Dabakala (Center-North of Côte d'Ivoire)

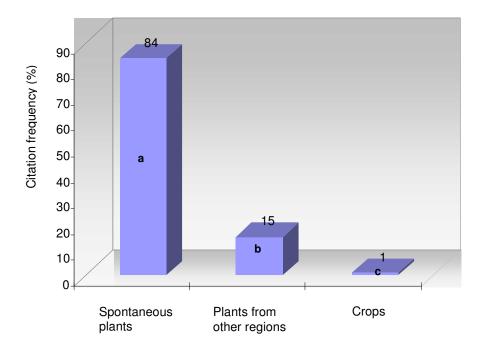


Figure 2. Distribution of frequency citation of plant species according on the plant type in regions of Katiola and Dabakala (Center-North of Côte d'Ivoire)

Values followed by a different letter are significantly different (test of Newman Keuls at 5%)

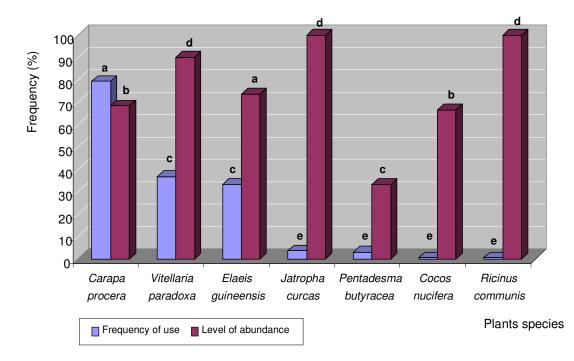


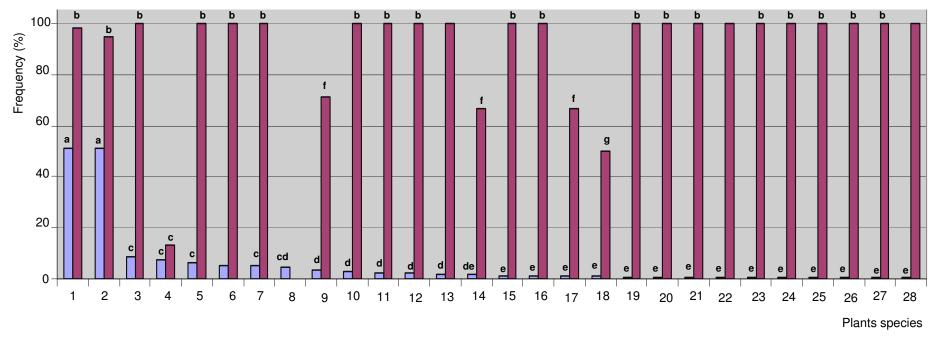
Figure 3. Frequency of use and level of abundance of the oleaginous plants used for the soapmaking in the regions of Katiola and Dabakala (Center-North of Côte d'Ivoire)

Values followed by a different letter are significantly different (test of Newman Keuls at 5%)

Table 4. Inventoried plants according to their origin in the regions of Katiola and Dabakala (Center-North of Côte d'Ivoire)

Spontaneous plants	Cultivated plants	Plants from other regions
Acacia polyacantha	Manihot esculenta	Cocos nucifera
Albizia ferruginea	Musa spp.	Coffea spp.
Albizia zygia	Sorghum spp.	Elaeis guineensis
Amaranthus spinosus		Theobroma cacao
Anogeissus leiocarpus		
Berlinia grandiflora		
Carapa procera		
Ceiba pentandra		
Cussonia arborea		
Ficus capensis		
Ficus exasperata		
Gardenia ternifolia		
Jatropha curcas		
Khaya senegalensis		
Parkia biglobosa		
Pentadesma butyracea		
Piliostigma thonningii		
Pterocarpus erinaceus		
Pupalia lappacea		
Ricinus communis		
Securidaca longepedunculata		
Spondias mombin		
Terminalia glaucescens		
Vitellaria paradoxa		
Vitex doniana		
Zanthoxylum zanthoxyloides		

However, *Theobroma cacao* with 13.3 % of abundance level is statically characterized by very low presence and the total absence of *Coffea* spp. (0 %) in the study region.





Values followed by a different letter are significantly different (test of Newman Keuls at 5%)

3.7. Classification of plant species recorded

To present the results, all taxa inventoried were grouped according to the combination with the frequency criteria of use - abundance level (**Table 5**). Abundant species are numerous (22), but only *Carapa procera* was requested much. *Ceiba pentandra, Cussonia arborea, Elaeis guineensis* and *Vitellaria paradoxa* were moderately used.

Plants used in potash manufacture			
1- Ceiba pentandra	11- Terminalia glaucescens	21- Gardenia ternifolia	
2- Cussonia arborea	12- Acacia polyacantha var.	22- Pupalia lappacea	
3- Anogeissus leiocarpus	13- Parkia biglobosa	23- Securidaca L.	
4- Theobroma cacao	14- Pterocarpus erinaceus	24- Ficus capensis	
5- Jatropha curcas	15- Albizia zygia	25- Ficus exasperata	
6- Piliostigma thonningii	16- Amaranthus spinosus	26- Khaya senegalensis	
7- Vitex doniana	17- Cocos nucifera (potasse)	27- Manihot esculenta	
8- Coffea spp.	18- Zanthoxylum zanthoxyloides	28- Sorghum spp.	
9- Musa spp.	19- Berlinia grandiflora		
10- Spondias mombin	20- Albizia ferruginea		

Table 5. Inventoried plants for the potash manufacture in the regions of Katiola and Dabakala	l
(Center-North of Côte d'Ivoire)	

4. DISCUSSION

Evaluation of plants devoted to traditional soapmaking in Sudanese region (Katiola and Dabakala) of Côte d'Ivoire showed a limited number of plants involved. Ethnobotanical studies conducted with methods similar to ours have an inventory of 75 wild edible fruit in the region of Seguela [3], and 42 medicinal plants used by people in rural Morocco [9]. The low number of plants species in this study (33) could be explained either by the restriction of our study area (traditional soap making), the tendency of people (mostly young) to shift away from traditional practice in benefits of modernity, and the reduction of plant resources in the study zone.

Regarding plant organs, the seeds and almonds used for the fat extraction seems to be satisfactory, because these organs are renewable following a regular physiological cycle. Their harvest does not affect the physical integrity of the plants. On the other hand, the almost exclusive use of stem (trunk and branches) for potash manufacture is particularly worrying. Indeed, many plants are often completely slaughtered and incinerated to obtain a good amount of ash, thus potash. This method of harvest puts in danger the survival of exploited plants species. According to Sælemyr [10]. there is a clear relationship between the traveled portion of the used plant and the effects of harvesting on its existence. The use of buttresses of Ceiba pentandra in potash manufacture was also reported by Tra Bi [11] in populations living to the neighbourhoods of the classified forests of Haut-Sassandra and Scio (West of Côte d'Ivoire). It was noted that the exploited species are primarily spontaneous, from the savannah. Several authors have explained that the extensive use of local species is due to the proximity of these plants [9, 12]. The limited number of plants used as source of fat (7 of 33 species) might suggest a limitation of oleaginous species in the environment, their ignorance by the people. The difficulties of extracting vegetable oil could also justify the neglect of women with respect to the oleiferous species. This would explain the fact that many oleiferous species quoted in the literature and in the region have not been reported by informants. It is obvious that the valuation of these unused resources can contribute to reduce the present pressure on

species already exploited, but also to help traditional soap makers to preserve this ancestral practice. Among the oil crops in the region, *Carapa procera* is the most preferred and used in soapmaking. The best quality of soaps made from oil of this plant and <u>it's the</u> non-use of this oil for food (because of its bitterness) as well as its therapeutic uses seem to support this preference.

Although moderately represented in the region, *C. procera* is known as an ecological restriction. The plant is essentially restricted to gallery forests. The exploitation of lowland rivers and rice is a serious threat to the survival of these species. It is the same for Pentadesma butyracea which remains very poorly represented in the study zone because of its limitation-limited to only a few shallows. The unavailability of the last species of plant and its oil very appreciated in the food, seem to justify its weak use in the traditional soap manufacture. These two species plants (C. procera and P. butyracea) therefore deserve special attention, and can allow their backup or upgrading their local populations. According to Ambe [3], particular attention should be given to relatively few products consumed today, the latter being for a loss with more or less rapid destruction of their habitat. In addition, Ottoson [13] reported the high content of oleic acid seeds of Carapa procera, which could justify its valuation. Thus, the domestication of these plants or their retention in agriculture could be considered as alternatives. Some plants that are well known and used, termed sub-spontaneous, such as Vitellaria paradoxa, Parkia biglobosa and Elaeis guineensis are already protected by the local population [3]. The threat on Carapa procera and Pentadesma butyracea is exclusively linked to their habitat (threatened and restricted) and not their exploitation. This explains the mention of C. procera, in addition to P. biglobosa and Spondias mombin among the underutilized plant species from Côte d'Ivoire and other parts of Africa [14-16].

Ceiba pentandra and Cussonia arborea were the most representative plants for potash manufacture. If the first specie is very abundant in West Africa [17] as well as in the study site and does not run of risk of imminent extinction, it is the opposite for the second species plant. Indeed, C. arborea is dominant in the landscape, i.e. the open savanna vegetation. However, savannahs ecosystems are the most destroyed by agricultural clearing. At this threat, should be add the systematic demolition of the plant for potash manufacture used in traditional soaps making. On the field investigation, we noticed that the plants species is present in the savannah far away from settlements. It is also used for medicinal purposes against conjunctivitis, leprosy, diarrhea and dysentery [14, 18, 19]. The preferential use of Ceiba pentandra and Cussonia arborea for making potash could be related to the quality and efficiency of potash compared to other plants. This is even true that many plants are abundant in the site or are very little used for potash manufacture. Therefore, face to the threats on plant species in the region, it is urgent to adopt a sustainable management approach for the safeguarding and preservation of the most exploited plants species. Thus, in addition to the domestication suggested for some plants, the identification of gallery forests portion as biological and ecological interest sites, may be an interesting approach. We note that none of the plants surveyed were among the endemic, rare or endangered in Côte d'Ivoire and West Africa [14, 20, 21].

5. CONCLUSION

The study has established a list of wild species used in the traditional soapmaking in Sudanese zone of Côte d'Ivoire, and evaluated the relative importance of these plants. 33 plant species have been recorded and 22 are abundant in study zone but *only Carapa procera* was used much. *Ceiba pentandra, Cussonia arborea, Elaeis guineensis* and *Vitellaria paradoxa* were moderately used. 28 plants are spontaneous (79 %) and 84 % of respondents reported their involvement in the traditional soapmaking. *Jatropha curcas* (100 %), *Ricinus communis* (100 %) and *Vitellaria paradoxa* (90.27 %) are very abundant for fat extraction while *Ceiba pentandra* and *Cussonia arborea* with 51.28 % of all citations are the most abundance level for potash. Harvesting the trees by stamping out is the most practiced method of collecting. Maintaining all these resources being illusory, identification of the products is more or less easy to value their useful approach. Thus, taking into account their frequency of use by people, their abundance level, 3 wild species were proposed for possible revalorization. These are *C. procera, P. butyracea* and *C. arborea*.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors declare that no competing interests exist.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

'COULIBALY and OUATTARA' led the study and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. 'KONKON' wrote the protocol, managed the analyses of the study. 'KAGOYIRE and KOUAKOU' managed the literature searches and KOUAKOU finalized the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript."

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I am co-author of the paper "spontaneous plants used in the traditional soap making in Côte d'Ivoire"; I read and approved the final manuscript.

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I have read, corrected and finalized the article entitled "spontaneous plants used in the traditional soap making in Côte d'Ivoire". So, approved the final manuscript

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