

ABSTRACT
PARALLEL WORKING SESSION

ELIMINATION OF HUNGER

Dr Maud Muchuweti
Department of Biochemistry, Faculty of Science
University of Zimbabwe

Background: Wild plant foods that our ancestors relied on have seen a sharp decline in production and use in the last few decades, and as a result, a lot of health and nutritional problems are evidently on the rise.

Objectives: This study was aimed at investigating the occurrence of wild plant foods of Buhera district of Zimbabwe and the role they play in household food security.

Subjects and Methods

Information on names of wild edible vegetables, part used as food and preparation and preservation methods was collected during a cross-sectional survey in 28 of the 32 wards of Buhera district. Women were the key elements for the interviews. A variety of wild plants including were collected during the survey and subjected to proximate and micronutrient analyses.

Results: About 130 different wild fruits, 73 wild vegetables, 14 wild grasses, 7 wild seeds, 18 wild tubers and 11 mushrooms were mentioned by people of the district under study. People in Buhera district have developed their own ways of preservation in order to store food to bridge the dry season. Nearly every respondent came up with examples of medicinal use of wild plant foods. Fruit of *Adansonia digitata* was found to have six times more vitamin C than orange. Wild vegetables, were found to contain high nutrient contents than exotic vegetables.

Conclusion: Focusing on these species would go a long in combating under nutrition and poor health while helping to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Keywords: Wild vegetables, Wild fruits, *Vitamin C*, *Rural Communities*.

Email: *muchuweti@medic.uz.ac.zw*