

A Review of the Nutritional, Health and Medicinal Benefits of Selected Endangered Food Spice Crops in South Eastern Nigeria

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Abstract : Many food spice crops are being endangered into extinction in Nigeria because of climate change as well as deforestation occasioned by population pressure and urbanization and also due to neglect of research and agronomic attention. This review was aimed at identifying the nutritional and health benefits of these endangered aromatic food spice crops. The findings of this review will help to popularize their cultivation and increase research efforts made in the agronomy of these food spice species. Nine aromatic food spice crop species identified to be facing the danger of extinction include: Guinea pepper (*Piper guineensis*), Utazi (*Gongronema latifolium*), Hoary or Thai lemon basil (*Ocimum africanum*), Mint basil (*Ocimum gratissimum*), Whole country onions(*Afrostryax lepidophyllus*), Jansa (*Cussonia bateri*), Negro pepper (*Xylopia aethiopica*), Ataiko or Orima (*Afromomium Danielle*), Aidan (*Tetrapleura tetraptera*). Findings from this review revealed that these species are capable of improving the nutrition and health of the rural dwellers but yet, are minimally cultivated. This paper also reviewed research made in the agronomy of these identified threatened food spice crops in the semi-urban Southeastern Nigeria environment and discovered that there is little research attention on them. The availability of these food spice crop species was discovered to come from collections made from nearby bushes and forests. This paper therefore recommends that agronomic packages such as pre-planting, planting and post-planting requirements be investigated and recommended in order to initiate and increase the cultivation of the selected endangered food spice crops as well as their productivity.

Keywords : review, endangered, food spice crops, South Eastern Nigeria

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