

Appraisal of the Nutritional Potential and Safety of Wild Vegetables of South Africa

Authors : Thozama Kwinana-Mandindi

Abstract : The contribution made by wild edible plants to the livelihoods, food baskets and diets of the indigenous people, particularly among the rural dwellers is invaluable. These wild vegetables are among the non-conventional crops which are widely distributed throughout the wild regions in South Africa, indigenous communities have always exploited for micro-nutrient supply. They also supply significant complex, recently discovered compounds, naturally occurring phytonutrients. In order to protect and promote sustainable use of these plants for household food security, there is a need to better understand them through studies and innovations. Assessment of the wild edible plants' safety is very key to the promotion as an agricultural product which can be utilised during dry seasons and periods of food scarcity to alleviate nutrient insecurity. Through the use of Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM) and energy dispersive X-ray spectroscopy (EDXS), the study is seen as the vital step in taking a holistic view of the value of the four most consumed wild vegetables in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa as they were analysed for safety and appraised for components that can influence utilisation. Results indicate that they can be relied upon and cultivation be promoted.

Keywords : nature's resource, wild vegetables, appraisal for safety, SEM

Conference Title : ICFSNPH 2015 : International Conference on Food Safety, Nutrition and Public Health

Conference Location : Zurich, Switzerland

Conference Dates : July 29-30, 2015