

# Contribution of spider plant (*Gynandropsis gynandra*) home gardens to household food security and income in Southern Benin

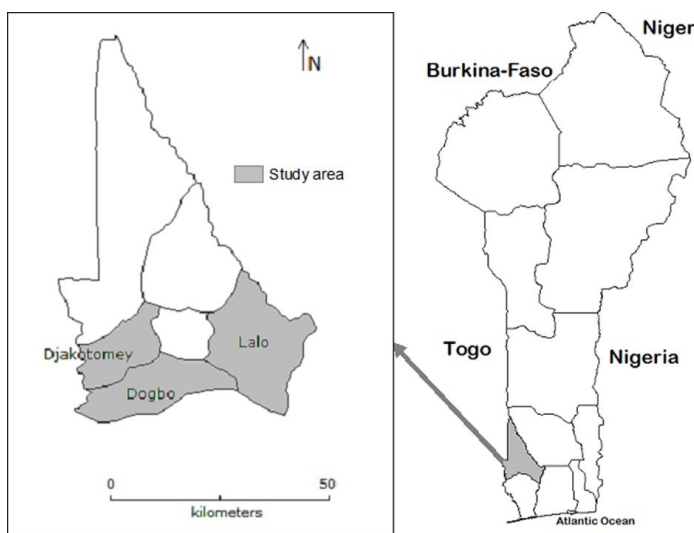
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## Introduction

African leafy vegetables play an important role in diet diversification and livelihoods of local communities in Africa. Spider plant is an orphan leafy vegetable widespread on the continent and valued as a vegetable and a medicinal plant in several communities. In Benin, the species is mostly harvested in the wild. However, for the Adja community in the Southern part of the country, spider plant is cultivated in home gardens and considered as an important food. Our study therefore aimed at analysing the current spider plant cropping systems in the area and identifying the bottlenecks for intensification of the production.

## Methodology



The study was carried out in Southern Benin in 19 villages of three municipalities: Dogbo, Lalo and Djakotomey.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 150 respondents including 40 farmers and 10 sellers per municipality.

Focus-group discussions were conducted in each municipality with 10 spider plant growers and 10 sellers.

## Results

- 80% of spider plant growers are female.
- The seeds cost about 250-500F CFA/100 g.
- The production is mainly rainfed and 85% of farmers apply organic manure (poultry and goat manure). Chemical fertilizers are used by 38% of the farmers and are considered to reduce the post-harvest shelf life of the leaves.
- The price of the leaves varied between 100 and 300 F CFA/kg.
- Farmers' constraints included: weeding (36%), lack of irrigation systems for off-season production (17%), incidence of pest and diseases (10%), the small size of the leaves after two harvests (8%) and price volatility (8%).
- The profitability of the species varied from 2.70 on average in the beginning of the rainy season to 0.24 on average in the beginning of the dry season.



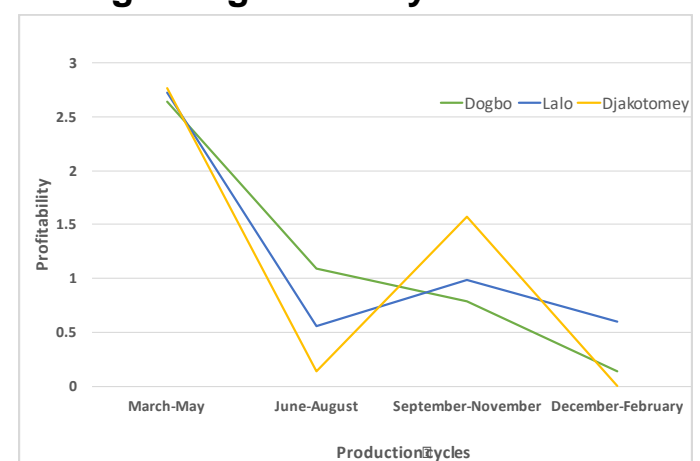
Spider plant seeds stored in fabrics



Spider plant home garden in Dogbo



Spider plant for sale at Dogbo market



## Conclusion

- Spider plant contributes to household diets and women livelihoods in Southern Benin.
- Ways forward: training farmers on appropriate cultivation and post-harvest management practices; quality seeds production and distribution; participatory development of high-yielding cultivars with multiple harvests ability.

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