

Evaluation of the Benefits Of “Christ-Thorn Jujube” *Ziziphus Spina-Christi* (L.) Desf Tree in Nigeria



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Abstract

This reviewed paper evaluates the Spiritual and Cosmetic benefits of Christ Thorn Jujube (*Ziziphus spina-christi*) tree. *Ziziphus spina-christi* is a multipurpose dryland tree, and is considered sacred by many religions, including Christianity from which it had acquired the common name “Christ-thorn”. This study was carried out in Three (3) States within Nigeria namely Adamawa, Kogi and Osun States. The high prevalence of Demons (genies), and Witchcraft attack in Nigeria has resulted in finding a natural remedy to reduce the attack. Acne is the most prevalent skin disease in the world and antibiotics as its standard treatments have limited and also adverse effects. Twenty Seven (27) patients aged between 6-31 years with Jin and witchcraft attack and Fifty Four (54) patients aged between 2-65 years with skin various issues were selected and treated with the soap and jelly made from the extracts of Christ-thorn (*Ziziphus spina-christi*) for four months. The data was analyzed using comparative analysis before and after using the soap and jelly on the patients. The results revealed that both the patients with jin/witchcraft attack and those with skin issues started receiving healings between two weeks to thirteen weeks of using the soap and jelly and fully recovered after fifteen weeks of using the products. *Ziziphus spina-christi* has the ability to drives away Demons (genies) because of its sanctity; it has medicinal properties like antibacterial, antifungal, antiviral, and it is used topically for treatment of various skin problems. Therefore, using *Ziziphus spina-christi* in cosmetics to treat both spiritual and skin problem/beautifying the skin cannot be overemphasized.

Keywords: Benefits; Christ-Thorn; Cosmetics; Evaluation; Spiritual; *Ziziphus spina-christi*

Introduction

Ziziphus spina-christi is a thorny shrub or tree that belongs to the family Rhamnaceae. *Ziziphus spina-christi* (Christ Thorn Jujube) is a widespread evergreen on wet sites, but sheds its leaves during extended periods of dry seasons, drought hardy medium-size tree, with spreading, greyish white branches and its thorns are in pairs, one curled and the other straight as shown in (Plate 1). *Ziziphus spina-christi* is growing up to a height of 20 meters and approximately 60 centimeters of a diameter Jinous A [1]. Once established, the tree can tolerate droughts and high temperatures of around 30^o C, but can also grow in relatively wetter areas with temperatures as low as 19^o C. It is believed that physiological attributes such as production of mucilage and accumulation of solutes in leaves, as well as possession of extensive and intensive root systems allow the tree to tolerate prolonged periods of dry season Legesse [2]. *Ziziphus spina-*

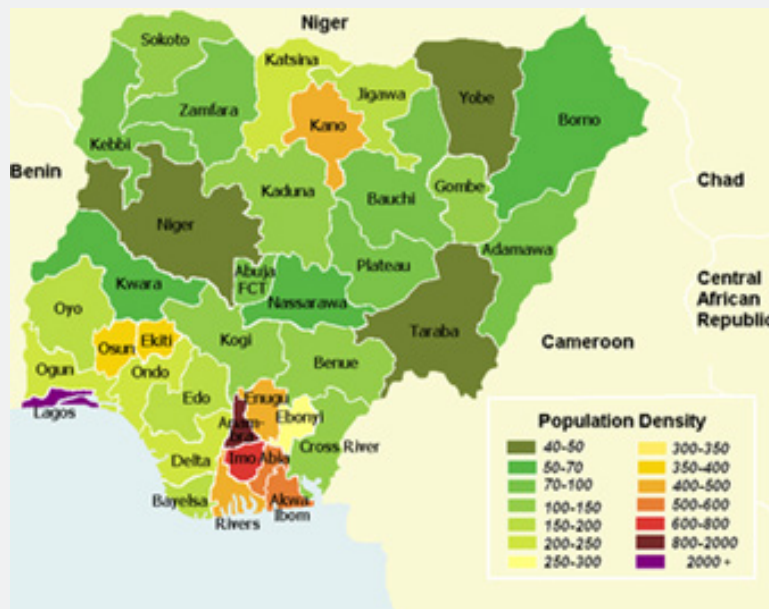
christi has many names. It is commonly known as Christ’s thorn in English, Jujube in French, Sidr in Arabic, Arboreal lotus tree (lotus of Cyrenaica) etc. *Ziziphus spina-christi* is an important tropical evergreen species of the family Rhamnaceae found growing massively in arid and semi-arid regions and native to Northern Africa and Western Asia Mathur & Vyas [3]; Maraghni [4]. It is the only tree species considered “holy” in addition to its status as “sacred tree” Dafni [5]. It is one of the common species inhabiting Al-Jabal Al-Akhdar and indigenous to Oman which showed a wide ecological and geographical distribution and growing under variety of environmental conditions and depression in deep sandy soil Maraghni [4]. They are an excellent source of food, fodder and fuel Mathur & Vyas [3]. The anti-inflammatory analgesic and antispasmodic properties were approved in rodent animals Borgi & Chouchane [6]. In traditional medicine, almost all parts of

Ziziphus spina-christi are used for the maintenance of health and for curing a number of diseases including asthma, dandruff, eye

diseases, fever, pains, ulcers, wounds, as well as various kinds of inflammatory conditions Legesse [2].



Plate 1: A Typical Image of Christ Thorns Leaves and Branches.



Source: Wikipedia.

Sacred Tree

Sacred trees are abundant in the history of religions and have attracted the attention of scholars with varying interests, focusing

on issues such as the religious and spiritual functions of living trees Haberman [7]; tree symbolism as an image of the world (imago mundi) and as the center of the world (axis mundi) Sullivan [8].

The powerful and evocative place that trees hold in the human imagination, which is apparent in religious and spiritual contexts, is in part due to their interdependence with, and resemblance to, human beings Carole [9]. Holy trees are part of sacred nature, a version of the physical world that is more than merely matter; it is infused with divinity. Throughout human history trees have been understood to demarcate physical territory, confer identity on the people who lived in the vicinity of their sheltering branches, have functioned as meeting places for religious and political assemblies, and acted as sites of ritual Carole [9].

***Ziziphus spina-christi* as a Sacred Tree**

Mythology in some of the Middle and Near East regions dictates that *Ziziphus spina-christi* is “protected by benevolent spirits or dead saints” Legesse [2]. An old Muslim legend tells about a Christ’s Thorn Jujube that grows in Paradise and has leaves as many as there are human beings Dafni [5]. Each leaf bears the names of a particular person and his or her parents. Every year, one day in the middle of the month of Ramadan, just after sunset, the tree is shaken. The names on the leaves that fall are of those who face death in the coming year. The process of the leaves’ decay intimates the timing of their death; some leaves dry up and fall immediately while others wither slowly, signifying the time the person has left Donaldson [10]. This legend reflects the respect in which Muslims hold all Christ’s Thorn Jujube trees, wherever they are. No wonder that the tree has received so much attention in Arab folk-lore in the Land of Israel in the past, and continues to do so to the present day. The Christ’s Thorn Jujube is considered a sacred tree in Israel. When the tree reaches its 40th year, the saints sit under it; therefore, the saints will destroy anyone who dares to cut down the tree or one of its branches Dafni [5]. The presence of saints under Christ’s Thorn Jujube trees imparted their holiness to the tree. Demons (genies) avoid the Christ’s Thorn Jujube tree because of its sanctity (Sakhnīn, 2005). One story tells that “every Thursday evening the music of some instrument could be heard coming from some Christ’s Thorn Jujube trees. Another story told and recorded in the Holy Land relates that lights were seen every Thursday night among the branches of few trees near “N’an’a” (Na’an) and ‘Aqir’ (Aqron) Hanauer [11]. *Ziziphus spina-christi* is frequently mentioned in Christian as well as Muslim traditions, and was also recorded by pilgrims who visited the Holy Land during generations.

In Christian tradition the tree was identified with the thorn bush with which Jesus was crowned before his crucifixion (Matthew 27:28–29; John 19:5; Mark 15:17). This is also the source for the scientific name (*spina-christi*). This tradition was supported by the parable of the tree recorded in Old Testament Book of Judges where the bramble has been identified as the Christ thorn. In Judges 9, *Ziziphus spina-christi* (bramble) vote to be the forest king! “All the trees said to the bramble, you come and reign over us! And the bramble said to the trees, “If in truth

you anoint me as king over you, Then come and take shelter in my shade; But if not, let fire come out of the bramble and devour the Cedars of Lebanon! (Judges 9: 14-15). The bramble, being the Christ-thorn, obviously represents Christ himself, who was rejected by his own people, as a result of which Jerusalem and its temple were set on fire in 70 AD when Roman forces took the city by force. Muslim as well as Christian pilgrims and travelers have described *Z. spina-christi* as a large tree that grew in the Land of Israel Dafni [5]. The tree was usually recorded for its uses and as a symbol of holiness Amar [12]. The pilgrims took branches of the tree back to their homeland as souvenirs in the belief that the Jesus’s crown of thorns was made from such branches Amar [12]. In Israel *Ziziphus spina christi* is especially respected because of its red sap, which looks like blood; it appears when the tree is hurt Barzvi [13]. Parish [14] report on the fruit of *Ziziphus spina christi* which are not infected by caterpillars in comparison to “non-sacred trees” of the same species.

***Ziziphus spina-christi* in Disease Management**

Since the development of bacterial and fungal Resistance and many other diseases has become an increasing concern, there has been an upsurge in interest in the therapeutic capabilities of traditional medicines Mahmoud [15]. All parts of *Ziziphus spina-christi* are traditionally used in the treatment and management of various ailments in different parts of the world Madani [16]. The extract of the plant is used in the management of dandruff, wounds, and hair loss in Bahrain Alalwan [17]. In Palestine, the leaves are used in the treatment of skin infections Abou [18]. As a remedy for constipation, people in Turkey rely on the fruit’s fiber content Tetik [19]. Cough medicine in Nigeria is typically made from the roots Adamu [20]. Fruits are used in Sudan to treat diarrhea, rheumatism, scorpion stings, malaria, and antispasmodics El-Kamali & El-Khalifa [21]. Decoction is made by boiling leaves and fruits in water for half an hour, and then it should be taken three times a day as an oral supplement to lower cholesterol and cancer risk. Boiling leaves and fruits in water for half an hour produces a typical decoction that is taken three times per day as an oral supplement Said [22]. In addition to the historic uses, modern medicine confirmed antibacterial, antioxidative and, interestingly, also antidiabetic properties of *Ziziphus spina-christi* leaves Mibelle Biochemistry [23]. The attack of Demons (genies), and Witchcraft is very high in Nigeria. Acne is the most prevalent skin disease in the world and antibiotics as its standard treatments have limited and also adverse effects. *Ziziphus spina-christi* has the ability to drives away Demons (genies) because of its sanctity; it has medicinal properties like antibacterial, antifungal, antiviral, and it is used topically for treatment of various skin issues. Therefore, using *Ziziphus spina-christi* in cosmetics to treat both spiritual and skin problems/beautifying the skin cannot be overemphasized. The aim of this study is to evaluate the efficacy of topical application of soap and jelly made from *Ziziphus spina-christi* tree in the treatment of spiritual attack and skin issues.

Study area

This study was carried out in Three (3) States within Nigeria namely Adamawa, Kogi and Osun States. Nigeria is a country in West Africa, it lies within the tropics along the Gulf of Guinea, on the west coast of Africa. Nigeria is located between Latitudes 4°N and 14°N of the equator and between longitude 3°E and 15°E of the Greenwich meridian. It has a total land area of approximately 923,768km² (Wikipedia) with a population of 206,760,319 United Nations [24]. Nigeria is bounded by Benin Republic on the South-West region, Cameroun on the South-East region, Niger Republic on the North-West region, Chad Republic on the North-East region, and Atlantic Ocean to the South-South region. Nigeria has 36 states and 774 LGAs with Abuja as the Federal Capital city.

Data Collection Method

Ziziphus spina-christi Soap and Jelly Making

Extracts of *Ziziphus spina-christi* tree were incorporated into soap and jelly productions as follows: The oil obtained from the seeds of *Ziziphus spina-christi* tree and the infusion of leaves and bark powder of the tree in olive oil was used as the base oils for saponification process of the soap production and the base oil for the jelly production. The powder from the grinded dried leaves and bark were added to the gel phase of soap making and the water used in boiling the bark and root were used to make the solution of Sodium hydroxide.

Administering of the Soap and Jelly on the Patients

Twenty Seven (27) patients aged between 6-31 years with Jin and witchcraft attack; Fifty Four (54) patients aged between 2-65 years with skin issues ranging from rashes, shaving bump, eczema, ring worm, dandruff, lies, sores, acne, to psoriasis were selected. Patients were evaluated before the application of the soap and jelly, and every fortnightly for four months.

Data Analysis

A comparative analysis before and after using the soap and jelly on the patients were carried out to determine the efficacy of the products.

Result

Jin and Witchcraft Attacked Patients

The results of the patients with jin and witchcraft attack shows that the patient having jin attack started recovering from the attack after two weeks of using the Christ-thorn soap and the jelly, and the attack completely stopped after thirteen weeks of using the products. Their condition changed from weird to normal. The patients with witchcraft attack stopped having horrible nightmares and start having normal sleep like every other person after four weeks of using the Christ-thorn soap and the jelly, and became fully normal in their doings after twelve weeks of using the products. The patients on sick bed due to the

evil attacks started recovery after seven weeks of using the Christ-thorn soap and the jelly and fully recovered after fifteen weeks of using the products.

Patients with Skin Issues

The results of the patients with skin issues shows that those individuals with dandruff, lies, sores; shaving bumps, wounds and skin rashes were completely cured after four weeks of using the Christ-thorn soap and jelly. Those patients with eczema, ring worm, acne, and psoriasis were completely cured after eight weeks of using the products. There was also a noticeable changes from those having other skin issues, and there was a significant changes in the skin texture of all the patients. Their skin became glassy and even toned.

Discussions

The Christ-thorn (*Ziziphus spina-christi*) soap and jelly produced were very active in treating demons (genies) and witchcraft attack. The presence of saints under Christ's thorn (*Ziziphus spina-christi*) trees imparted their holiness to the tree. Demons (genies) avoid the Christ's Thorn Jujube tree because of its sanctity (Sakhnin 2005). The Christ-thorn (*Ziziphus spina-christi*) tree was usually recorded for its uses and as a symbol of holiness Amar [12]. In the words of Tahir 'Abu 'Antar (Tamra, 2004), "The Sidr (*Ziziphus spina-christi*) tree is like a sheikh", and you have to pay it respect as you would elderly people. In modern Islam, sitting under a Christ's thorn (*Ziziphus spina-christi*) tree is considered lucky, since the Prophet saw such tree in Paradise Reat [25]. This idea might underlie the traditional belief that a potion made of Christ's Thorn Jujube leafs is the best supernatural remedy to expel demons (Mahmud 2004). The Christ-thorn (*Ziziphus spina-christi*) soap and jelly produced were very active in treating dandruff, lies, sores; shaving bumps, wounds, skin rashes, ringworm, eczema, and psoriasis. The leaves of *Ziziphus spina-christi* are applied locally to sores, and the roots are used to cure and prevent skin diseases Adzu [26]. From current pharmaceutical studies, additional pharmaceutical applications of *Ziziphus spina-christi* have revealed antifungal, antibacterial, anti-nociceptive, antioxidant, anti-hyperglycemic antidiabetic, anti-plasmodial, anti-schistosomiasis, analgesic and anticonvulsant activities among others El-Kamali & Mahjoub [27]; Adzu [28]; Asgarpanah & Haghghat [29]. *Ziziphus spina-christi* stem bark aqueous extract has shown highly significant antibacterial effect activity on some Gram negative bacterial growth including *Brucella abortus*, *Brucella melitensis*, *Proteus* spp., *Klebsiella* spp., *P. aeruginosa*, *E. coli* and *Enterobacter* spp. When compared with eight antibiotics Korji [30].

Conclusion

The Christ-thorn (*Ziziphus spina-christi*) tree and items made from the tree and its extracts have been associated with the Crown of Thorns and the Crucifixion of Christ. As a relic touched

by Christ, it is considered to have healing power and protective nature. The soap and jelly made from the blessed symbol of holiness tree (*Ziziphus spina-christi*) extracts is an antiseptic, antibacterial, antifungal, anti-inflammatory, germicidal agent, and act as astringent. The soap and jelly made from the extracts of Christ-thorn jujube (*Ziziphus spina-christi*) tree which host saints and drives away demons has the ability to deeply cleanse and restores the health of damaged skin; detoxifies the skin; prevents premature ageing of the skin; soothes and heals bites, wounds, skin irritations, and treats skin conditions such as pimples, shaving bumps, skin blemishes, acne, body odor, eczema, psoriasis, warts, dry skin, and balances oily skin.

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