

## **Wild Edible Plants in Saudi Arabia**

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**ABSTRACT.** A check list of 98 wild edible plants belonging to 35 families are listed in alphabetical order. The plants collected in Saudi Arabia were dried, identified and kept in the herbarium for its nutrient value studies. Common English and Arabic names together with comments on the usage of the plants are also provided.

Plants, and especially food plants, play an important role in the development and very existence of man. Humans in the past have consumed the leaves, stems, fruits, roots etc. of nearly 3000 species of plants in the world, but the advanced agricultural technology has led us to rely on only twenty species to supply some 90% of the human diet (Hedrick 1919).

Estimates show that, although wild plants can theoretically supply about 10% of the population's energy needs, their contribution to the vitamin and mineral supply is considerable. The importance of wild plants in human diet, especially in third world countries has been recently emphasised and focused upon due to their promising economic value and the increasing demand for food (Kunkel 1984). It has been estimated that two-thirds of the world's population live in countries in which average diet is sub-standard. Many plants that are considered as weeds, were once used as food plants, though there is a great diversity in their quality when compared with the cultivated ones. All plants contain chemical compounds which can be used by man and animals, to produce energy, or to build new cells. In terms of nutritional value, wild plants generally come out ahead of their garden varieties. A great deal of the medicinal value originally associated with many wild plants was due simply to their vitamin content, which cured the vitamin deficiency diseases

that were so widespread in the past (Hall 1976). But over ages some plants have become more acceptable to man than others and have been cultivated extensively. The cultivated plants of the world including wheat, rice, potato and other cereals, which comprise (60 - 70)% of the whole human diet, obviously had their origin as wild plants. Even today, there are parts of the world where wild plants are the major source of vitamin C, which is necessary for growth. Now the number of people who regularly gather and use wild plants has so reduced that only very few inhabitants of the more isolated rural areas keep the tradition alive and many plants such as Amaranth and Goose foot whose use extends back beyond man's earliest records have come to be regarded as noxious weeds by the majority of people.

The objective of this check list of wild edible plants in Saudi Arabia is to make people aware of the plants that were used in the past as food plants. All species mentioned in this paper are found in Saudi Arabia. Most of the plants mentioned in this list were included on the basis of information from the local people. Extensive travels in the Kingdom during the last few years also helped the authors to verify the geographical distribution of the plants and to clarify doubts regarding their edibility. However, a thorough study in this field, including seed germination and chemical analysis to check its nutrient value is inevitable to prove how far these plants are reliable. Though this is only an initial step, we look forward to publish an elaborated work in the near future. Cultivated plants are not included in this paper as they are introduced in this country from other parts of the world.

### **Materials and Methods**

Field trips were conducted over several years to collect specimens of the wild plants and to get ample information concerning their edibility from the local people. Various herbarium specimens were collected are dried, identified and deposited in the Herbarium (K.S.U.H.) of the King Saud University, Riyadh.

Scientific, English and Arabic names as well as the edible parts of the plants have been provided. The scientific names are based on various books dealing with the plants of Saudi Arabia (Chaudhary 1989, Collenette 1985, Mandaville 1990, and Migahid 1978). Common English names used in this text are derived from several texts (Kunkel 1984, Al-Eisawi and Takruri 1989, Angier 1974, Hedrick 1919, and Schery 1952). In addition, different Arabic names are given for many taxa based on interviews with local people or from other sources (Migahid 1978, Ageel *et al.* 1987, Bay 1930).

## Catalogue of Edible Species

## ANACARDIACEAE

*Pistacia khinjuk* Stocks

English Name: Terebenth tree

Arabic Name: Bothum

Edible Part: Raw leaves and young shoots are eaten as salad.

بُطْم

## AMARANTHACEAE

*Amaranthus spinosus* L.

English Name: Thorny Amaranth

Arabic Name: Katifah, Shaekah

Edible Part: Cooked leaves and young stems.

فَطِيْفَه، شَعْبَكَة

*Amaranthus viridis* L.

English Name: Amaranth

Arabic Name: Kabshah, Lagnah

Edible Part: Cooked young stems and leaves.

كَبْشَه، لَغْنَه

*Amaranthus graecizans* L.

English Name: Amaranth

Arabic Name: Shagarat-Alsenteen

Edible Part: Cooked leaves and stems.

شَجَرَة السُّنْتِيْن

## ANNONACEAE

*Annona squamosa* L.

English Name: Sugar Apple

Arabic Name: Al-Kashtah

Edible Part: Ripe fruits.

الْقَشْطَه

## CAPPARIDACEAE

*Capparis spinosa* L.

English Name: Caper

Arabic Name: Shafallah, Lassaf

Edible Part: Raw fruits are used to make pickles.

شَفَلْخ، لَصَف

## CARYOPHYLLACEAE

*Stellaria media* (L.) Vill.

English Name: Chickweed, Starwort

Arabic Name: Hashyhat-Algadar

حَشِيْشَةُ الْقَدْرِ

Edible Part: The whole plant is used after cooking; much resembling spinach in flavour.

*Paronychia argentea* Lam.

English Name: Mountain knotgrass, Silvery Whitlow-wort

Arabic Name: Rukhaimah, Kurraishah, Riji-ul-Hamameh

رُخَيْمَةٌ، كُرَيْشَةٌ، رِجْلُ الْحَمَامَةِ

Edible Part: Young stems and leaves, eaten raw.

## CELASTRACEAE

*Catha edulis* Forssk.

English Name: Arabian Tea, Khat

Arabic Name: Gatt

الْقَات

Edible Part: Dried leaves and twigs were used in the preparation of a beverage possessing properties analogous to those of tea and coffee.

## CHENOPODIACEAE

*Beta vulgaris* L.

English Name: Beet root, Leaf-Beet

Arabic Name: Shamandar, slag-barri

شَمَنْدَرٌ، سَلَقٌ بَرِّيٌّ

Edible Part: Cooked roots.

*Chenopodium album* L.

English Name: White goosefoot

Arabic Name: Atarah

عُتْرَةٌ

Edible Part: Young shoots and leaves are used as spinach.

*Chenopodium ambrosioides* L.

English Name: Goose foot

Arabic Name: Aloffainah, Natenah

الْعُمَيْيْنَةُ، نَتْنَةُ

Edible Part: Young shoots and leaves are used as spinach.

*Suaeda maritima* (L.) Dum.

English Name: Sea-Blite

Arabic Name: Sweed, Hamdh

سُوَيْدٌ، حَمْدٌ

Edible Part: Leaves, eaten raw.

## COMPOSITAE

*Chrysanthemum coronarium* L.

English Name: Chrysanthemum, Crown Daisy

Arabic Name: Oghowan

أَفْحَوَانُ

Edible Part: Young stems without leaves, eaten raw.

*Lactuca saligna* L.

English Name: Lettuce

Arabic Name: Hawa, Hawmal

حَوَى، حَوْمَل

Edible Part: Raw leaves are used for making salad.

*Lactuca sativa* L.

English Name: Lettuce

Arabic Name: Odhaid

عَضَيْد

Edible Part: Raw leaves are used for making salad.

*Lactuca serriola* L.

English Name: Prickly lettuce

Arabic Name: Fiss-al-Baggar, Lubtain al Shiekh

فَيْسُ البَقَرِ، لُبَيْنُ الشَّيْخِ .

Edible Part: Young raw leaves are used for salad.

*Matricaria aurea* (Loefl.) Sch. Bip.

English Name: Chamomile

Arabic Name: Baboonig, Zuffairah, Atfarah

بَابُونِج، زُفَيْرَه، عَطْفَرَه

Edible Part: The infusion of the whole plant is used as a hot beverage.

*Pulicaria incisa* (Lam.) DC.

English Name: Pleabane

Arabic Name: Shay-ul-Jabal

شَاي الجَبَل

Edible Part: Infusion of leaves and stems is used as a hot beverage.

*Scorzonera papposa* DC.

English Name: Viper's grass

Arabic Name: Thibbah, Dhibbah

ذُبَّاح، ضَبَّاح

Edible Part: The whole plant eaten raw.

*Scorzonera schweinfurthia* Boiss.

English Name: Viper's grass

Arabic Name: Gaafur, Thibbah

جَعْفُور، ذُبَّاح

Edible Part: The whole plant, eaten raw.

*Silybum marianum* (L.) Gaertn.

English Name: Holy thistle

Arabic Name: Shawk al Jamal, Lehlah, Kherfees

شوك الجمل، لَهْلَاح، خِرْفَيز

Edible Part: Very young leaves are suitable for salads.

*Sonchus oleraceus* L.

English Name: Sow thistle

Arabic Name: Hawa, Kelap, Jeatheeth, Odhaid

حَوَى، كَلَابْ، جَثِيْث، عُضِيْضَ

Edible Part: Young stems and branches, eaten raw.

*Tripleurospermum auriculatum* (Boiss.) Rech.f.

English Name: Yellow button plant

Arabic Name: Garais, Girgass

قُرَيْص، قُرْفَاص

Edible Part: Raw leaves. Very hot-tasting to the tongue.

#### CONVOLVULACEAE

*Convolvulus arvensis* L.

English Name: Field Bindweed

Arabic Name: Allulyg, Maddad

عَلِيْق، مَدَاد

Edible Part: Cooked leaves are edible. Eating in large quantities may cause indigestion.

*Ipomoea aquatica* Forssk.

English Name: Water convolvulus

Arabic Name: Zabeed, Sakar

زَبِيْد، سَكْر

Edible Part: Leaves and stems, eaten after cooking.

#### CRUCIFERAE

*Capsella bursa-pastoris* (L.) Medicus

English Name: Sheperd's purse

Arabic Name: Kyes-Alrai

اَكِيْس الرَّاعِي

Edible Part: Cooked leaves and young stems.

*Diplotaxis acris* (Forssk.) Boiss.

English Name: Rocket

Arabic Name: Hwairah, Yahah

حُوَيْرَه، يَاح

Edible Part: Young leaves and stems, eaten raw.

*Diplotaxis erucoïdes* (L.) DC.

English Name: White Wall-Rocket

Arabic Name: Gorrairah, Hwairrah

قُرَيْرَه، حُوَيْرَه

Edible Part: Young leaves and stems, eaten raw.

*Eruca sativa* Mill.

English Name: Garden Rocket

Arabic Name: Jerjeer

جرجير

Edible Part: Young shoots and leaves are used as salad.

*Lepidium aucheri* Boiss.

English Name: Cress, Pepper wort

Arabic Name: Rashad, Kharfak

رشاد، خرفك

Edible Part: Young leaves are used for making salad.

*Lepidium sativum* L.

English Name: Garden Cress, Pepper Cress

Arabic Name: Rashad, Kharfak

رشاد، خرفك

Edible Part: Young leaves are used as salad.

*Raphanus sativus* L.

English Name: Raddish

Arabic Name: Fijel

فجل

Edible Part: Raw or cooked tuberous roots.

*Sinapis arvensis* L.

English Name: Charlock

Arabic Name: Liffaiteh, Khardal

لِفَيْتَه، خردل

Edible Part: Young stems and leaves, eaten raw.

*Sisymbrium irio* L.

English Name: London Rocket, Hedge Mustard Rocket

Arabic Name: Huwairreh, Sheliat

حويره، شَلِيَّاط

Edible Part: Leaves and young branches eaten raw.

## CUCURBITACEAE

*Citrullus colocynthis* (L.) Schrad.

English Name: Colocynth, Wild gourd

Arabic Name: Handhal, Sharry

حنضل، شري

Edible Part: Cooked and treated seeds are used for munching.

*Cucumis melo* L.

English Name: Melon

Arabic Name: Shammam, Harash

شمام، حَرَش

Edible Part: Ripe fruits.

*Momordica balsamina* L.

English Name: Balsam apple

Arabic Name: Bailsan, Malah

بَيْلسَان، مَلَّه

Edible Part: Whole plant is eaten after careful washing in warm water and subsequent cooking.

*Momordica charantia* L.

English Name: Bitter gourd

Arabic Name: Bailsan, Mallaih

بَيْلسَان، مَلَّيْح

Edible Part: Cooked fruits. Also the juice obtained from the fruits is used as a medicine.

## CYNOMORACEAE

*Cynomorium coccineum* L.

English Name: Cynomorium

Arabic Name: Tarthooth

طَرْتُوْث

Edible Part: The powder obtained from the dried fruit is used as a condiment. The stem is edible after peeling the bark.

## CYPERACEAE

*Cyperus esculentus* L.

English Name: Earth almond, Zulu nuts, Ghufa

Arabic Name: Habal Zalam, Aldoabaib

حَبْل زَلَم، الصُّبَيْب

Edible Part: Tuberos roots are very sweet and are eaten raw.

*Cyperus rotundus* L.

English Name: Nut grass

Arabic Name: Saad

سَعْد

Edible Part: The underground stems produces spindle-shaped tubers or nuts which are eatable after boiling for 15 minutes.

## GRAMINEAE

*Avena byzantina* C. Koch

English Name: Red Oats, Algerian Oats

Arabic Name: Shoofan

شُوْفَان

Edible Part: Grains

*Avena fatua* L.

English Name: Wild Oats

Arabic Name: Danban

دَنْبَان

Edible Part: Grains



*Avena sativa* L.

English Name: Oats

Arabic Name: Shoofan

شوفان

Edible Part: Grains

*Eleusine aegyptiaca* (L.) Desf.

English Name: Egyptian millet

Arabic Name: Bathanah

بَثْنَه

Edible Part: The flour obtained from the ground seeds is used for making breads.

*Eleusine coracana* (L.) Gaertn.

English Name: Finger millet

Arabic Name: Kanab, Bathanah

قَنْب، بَثْنَه

Edible Part: Grains

*Panicum miliaceum* L.

English Name: Proso Millet, Broomcorn millet, Indian Buffalo grass

Arabic Name: Thora Hamra

ذُرَّةُ حَمْرَاء

Edible Part: Grains

*Pennisetum glaucum* (L.) R. Br.

English Name: Pearl Millet

Arabic Name: Dukhan

دُخَان

Edible Part: The flour from the ground seeds is nutritious.

*Sorghum vulgare* Pers.

English Name: Broom corn, Rice corn

Arabic Name: Thorah, Thorah Sayfi

ذره، ذره صيفي

Edible Part: The flour obtained from the ground seeds is used for making bread.

#### LABIATAE

*Lallemantia iberica* Fisch. & Mey.

English Name: Lallemantia

Arabic Name: Lalementia

اللالي منتيا

Edible Part: Seeds are very rich in mucilage.

*Lavendula dentata* L.

English Name: Lavender

Arabic Name: Jethjat, Hethat

جَثْجَات، جَثْحَات

Edible Part: Flowers, eaten raw.

*Mentha longifolia* L.

English Name: Mint

Arabic Name: Habag, Na'na-barri

حَبَّاق، نَبْنَع بَرِي

Edible Part: Dried stems and leaves eaten as a salad.

*Ocimum basilicum* L.

English Name: Sweet basil, Garden basil

Arabic Name: Rehan

رِيحَان

Edible Part: Leaves and stem tops are used for seasoning soups, stews, sauces, and various other dishes.

*Origanum syriacum* L.

English Name: Thyme, Syrian Hyssop

Arabic Name: Za'tar

زَعْتَر

Edible Part: Dried leaves and young stems are used for making salad and dough stuffing.

*Rosmarinus officinalis* L.

English Name: Rosemary

Arabic Name: Obaitheran, Hasheshat al arab

عَبِيثْرَان، حَشِيشَة الْعَرَب

Edible Part: Leaves are used in flavouring meats and soups.

*Thymus bovei* Benth.

English Name: Thyme

Arabic Name: Za'tar Farsi

زَعْتَر فَارِسِي

Edible Part: Fresh or dried leaves and young branches used for making salad.

## LEGUMINOSAE

*Medicago orbicularis* (L.) Bart.

English Name: Flat-Podded Medick

Arabic Name: Nafal, Hassak, Khops al raei

نَفْل، حَسَك، خَبْز الرَّاعِي

Edible Part: Fruits eaten raw.

*Medicago sativa* L.

English Name: Alfalfa

Arabic Name: Barseem hejazi, Gartah

بَرْسِيم حِجَازِي، قَتَّة

Edible Part: Cooked leaves, eaten as a vegetable.

*Tamarindus indica* L.

English Name: Tamarind

Arabic Name: Tamur-hendi

تَمْر هِنْدِي

Edible Part: Ripe fruit is one of the ingredients in cooking various dishes.

## LILIACEAE

*Allium ampeloprasum* L.

English Name: Wild Leek

Arabic Name: Basal Al-efreet

بصل العفريت

Edible Part: Whole young plant, eaten raw.

*Asparagus aphyllus* L.

English Name: Wild Asparagus

Arabic Name: Kherres, Helion, Halian

خريش، هليون، هاليان

Edible Part: Young stems and leaves, eaten after cooking.

*Gagea reticulata* (Pallas) Schultes & Schultes f.

English Name: Yellow star of Bethlehem

Arabic Name: Zeiman, Zeimathan

زيمان، زيمان

Edible Part: Cooked underground bulbs.

## MALVACEAE

*Abutilon indicum* (L.) Sweet

English Name: Abutilon

Arabic Name: Karkadan, Hambook

كركدان، همبوك

Edible Part: Raw flowers and leaves. The leaves contain large quantities of mucilage.

*Hibiscus sabdariffa* L.

English Name: Indian Sorrel, Roselle

Arabic Name: Karkadah, Karshat al gorab

كركديه، كرشة الغراب

Edible Part: The thick succulent sepals were used for making jelly.

*Malva neglecta* Wallr.

English Name: Dwarf-Mallow

Arabic Name: Khoppaizah, Al-ragwah

خبيزة، الرقوة

Edible Part: Young shoots and leaves are used in cooking various dishes.

*Malva parviflora* L.

English Name: Mallow

Arabic Name: Khoppaizah, Garah

خبيزة، قاره

Edible Part: Young shoots and leaves used after cooking.

*Malva sylvestris* L.

English Name: Cheeses, High Mallow, Marsh Mallow

Arabic Name: Khoppaizah

خبيزة

Edible Part: Foliage, when boiled, forms a very wholesome vegetable; flat seeds are also edible.

*Malva verticillata* L.

English Name: Curled Mallow

Arabic Name: Khoppaizah

خبيزة

Edible Part: Young shoots and leaves, used after cooking.

## MORACEAE

*Ficus carica* L.

English Name: Fig

Arabic Name: Balas

بلس

Edible Part: Deep purple ripe fruits.

*Ficus vasta* Forssk.

English Name: Fig.

Arabic Name: Tuluk, Tulluk

طُلُق، طُلُوق

Edible Part: Ripe fruits.

## OLEACEAE

*Olea europea* L.

English Name: Olive

Arabic Name: Otam, Zaitoon-barri

عُثم، زيتون بري

Edible Part: Ripe fruits.

## OXALIDACEAE

*Oxalis corniculata* L.

English Name: Wood Sorrel

Arabic Name: Barseem, Dydaban

برسيم، ديدبان

Edible Part: Cooked leaves. The plant is toxic if use in large quantities. The leaves have to be mellowed by placing them in the sun to get rid of calcium oxalate.

## PALMAE

*Hyphaene thebaica* (L.) Mart.

English Name: Gingerbread Tree

Arabic Name: Doam

دوم

Edible Part: Fruit pericarp.

*Phoenix dactylifera* L.

English Name: Date plant

Arabic Name: Nakhhal-Albalah

نخل البلح

Edible Part: Ripe fruits.

## PEDALIACEAE

*Sesamum indicum* L.

English Name: Sesame

Arabic Name: Sumsum, Jeljelan

سُمْسُم، جِلْجِلَانُ

Edible Part: Seeds used for spreading on bread, also the sesame oil extracted from the seeds is used for cooking.

## PLANTAGINACEAE

*Plantago coronopus* L.

English Name: Crow foot plantain

Arabic Name: Rabalah, Wodainah

رَبْلَه، وَدَيْنَه

Edible Part: The leaves, eaten as salad.

*Plantago lanceolata* L.

English Name: Rib grass, Ribwort plantain

Arabic Name: Athan al Kapsh, Nawarat al Krab

أُذُن الكَبِش، نَوَارَة الغَرَاب

Edible Part: Leaves used as spinach vegetable.

*Plantago ovata* Forssk.

English Name: Psyllium

Arabic Name: Lugmat-Alnaagah

لُقْمَة النَّعْجَه

Edible Part: Raw leaves used as a vegetable. Seeds, rich in mucilage, also eaten.

## POLYGONACEAE

*Rumex nervosus* Vahl.

English Name: Dock, sorrel

Arabic Name: Atrah

عَطْرَة

Edible Part: Fresh succulent shoots and young leaves.

*Rumex vesicarius* L.

English Name: Sorrel, Bladder dock

Arabic Name: Hummaidh

حُمَيْض

Edible Part: The whole plant especially the leaves are used for making salad.

## PORTULACACEAE

*Portulaca oleracea* L.

English Name: Purslane

Arabic Name: Rejlal, Baglah

رَجْلَه، بَقْلَه

Edible Part: Young shoots and leaves are used for making salads.

## RANUNCULACEAE

*Nigella sativa* L.

English Name: Black cumin

Arabic Name: Habat Albarakah

حَبَّةُ الْبَرَكَةِ

Edible Part: Its seeds are used for spreading on bread, also used for seasoning curries and other dishes.

*Ranunculus muricatus* L.

English Name: Pile wort, Butter cup

Arabic Name: Zaghleel

رَغْلِيل

Edible Part: Raw leaves and young shoots are used as a salad.

## RHAMNACEAE

*Rhamnus staddo* A. Rich. var. *deflersii* (Schweinf.) Chiov.

English Name: Buck Thorn

Arabic Name: Neem

نَيْم

Edible Part: Fresh ripe fruits

*Ziziphus spina-christi* (L.) Willd.

English Name: Ziziphus, Christ thorn

Arabic Name: Seder, Nabug

سِيدْر، نَبُوق

Edible Part: Fresh and dry ripe fruits.

## ROSACEAE

*Rubus sanctus* Schreb.

English Name: Black berry, Bramble

Arabic Name: Toot-Shooki

توت شوكي

Edible Part: Fresh fruits

## SALVADORACEAE

*Salvadora persica* L.

English Name: Tooth brush tree

Arabic Name: Meswak, Arak

مِسْوَاك، أَرَاك

Edible Part: Ripe fruits.

## SOLANACEAE

*Lycium shawii* Roem. & Schult.

English Name: Box Thorn

Arabic Name: Awsaj

عَوْسَج

Edible Part: Ripe fruits.

*Solanum nigrum* L.

English Name: Black Nightshade

Arabic Name: Khormah, Enab al theeab

خُرمَه، عنب الذيب

Edible Part: Leaves and young stems, eaten as spinach.

## ULMACEAE

*Celtis africana* Burm. f.

English Name: Nettle Tree

Arabic Name: Almese, Lothus

عَلْبَيْس، لُوْتُس

Edible Part: Fresh yellow fruits

## UMBELLIFERAE

*Ammi majus* L.

English Name: Bishop's Weed

Arabic Name: Khullah

خُلَّة

Edible Part: Young fresh shoots, eaten raw.

*Apium graveolens* (L.) Lag.

English Name: Celery

Arabic Name: Korfuss

كِرْفُس

Edible Part: Young stems and leaves, eaten raw.

*Eryngium glomeratum* Lam.

English Name: Button Snake root

Arabic Name: Gorsaannah

فُرْصَانَه

Edible Part: Young leaves and shoots, eaten raw.

*Scandix pecten-veneris* L.

English Name: Scandix, Venbus comb, Wild Chervil

Arabic Name: Mushetah

مُشَيْطَه

Edible Part: Young stems and leaves, eaten either raw or cooked.

## URTICACEAE

*Urtica pilulifera* L.

English Name: Roman Nettle

Arabic Name: Hurraig, Gurraiss, Gergass

حُرَيْق، قُرَيْص، قُرْقَاص

Edible Part: Fresh young shoots, eaten raw.

*Urtica urens* L.

English Name: Nettle

Arabic Name: Hurraig, Gurraiss, Gergass

حُرَيْق، قُرَيْص، قُرْقَاص

Edible Part: The boiled stems and leaves are eaten like spinach or used in soups.

## VERBENACEAE

*Vitex agnus-castus* L.

English Name: Chaste tree

Arabic Name: Fagd. Kaff

Edible Part: Fruits

نَفْذ، كَف

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## النباتات البرية المستعملة للأكل في المملكة العربية السعودية

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تعتبر مشكلة الأمن الغذائي من أبرز المشاكل التي يعاني منها العالم وخاصة دول العالم الثالث، ولما كان كثير من النباتات المستعملة في تغذية الانسان اليوم في أصولها نباتات برية فإن انظار المختصين من العلماء بدأت تتجه نحو النباتات البرية كمساهم في حل تلك المشكلة خصوصاً أن من المجتمعات البشرية من لا يزال يعتمد في غذائه على بعض الأصناف من النباتات البرية. كما قد أثبتت التجارب إمكانية إستزراعها والاستفادة منها اقتصادياً.

والمملكة العربية السعودية ككثير من بلدان العالم غنية بهذه النباتات القابلة للأكل مما شجع الباحثين على القيام بالتنقل بين مناطق المملكة المختلفة لجمع هذه النباتات والمعلومات حولها والتعريف بها وتثبيت أهميتها على أمل أن يعقب هذه الدراسة دراسات تفصيلية لطرق استعمالها والقيمة الغذائية لكل نبات ومدى إسهام هذه النباتات في تدعيم الأمن الغذائي للبلاد.

وقد تم في هذه الدراسة اعداد قائمة من ثمانية وتسعون نوعاً من النباتات البرية المنتمية إلى خمس وثلاثين عائلة والمستعملة للأكل من قبل الانسان في المملكة العربية السعودية. كما تم ترتيب هذه النباتات أبجدياً، وقد شملت القائمة على الاسماء العلمية والانجليزية والعربية وكذلك الجزء الصالح للأكل

لكل نبات . علماً بأن النباتات المدروسة قد جمعت من مناطق مختلفة في المملكة العربية السعودية وحفظت عينات منها في معشب جامعة الملك سعود بالرياض .

وتوضح الدراسة تبايناً في عدد الأنواع النباتية لكل عائلة حيث احتوت الفصيلة المركبة على ١١ نوعاً، بينما بينت هذه الدراسة أن هناك ١٣ فصيلة تحتوي كل منها على نوع واحد فقط، كما أن الجزء المأكول من قبل الانسان يختلف من نبات لآخر فقد يشمل النبات بأسره وقد يقتصر على جزء من النبات كالأوراق أو الثمار أو البذور . ومن النباتات ما يؤكل طازجاً بدون طهي ومنها ما يطهى كما أن منها ما يؤكل جافاً .