



Insecticidal and Anti-ovipositional Activities of the Stem-bark Powder of *Jatropha curcas* (L.) (Euphorbiaceae) Against *Callosobruchus maculatus* (Fab.) (Coleoptera: Chrysomelidae)

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(Submitted: August 15, 2018; Accepted: October 28, 2018)

Abstract

This study investigated the insecticidal and anti-ovipositional activities of the stem-bark powder of *Jatropha curcas* (L.) (Euphorbiaceae) against *Callosobruchus maculatus* (F.) (Coleoptera: Chrysomelidae) under laboratory conditions. Five (5) pairs of sexed freshly emerged adults of *C. maculatus* were exposed to cowpea grains (20 g) treated with different concentrations (0.0 g, 1.0 g, 2.0 g, and 3.0 g) of *J. curcas* stem-bark powder for 24, 48, 72, 96 and 120 hours after which percentage mortality was calculated. In the same experimental setup, anti-ovipositional activity of the stem-bark powder of *J. curcas* was determined by counting the number of eggs on each cowpea grain after 120 hours of mating and oviposition by the test insect (= *C. maculatus*). In this study, mortality of *C. maculatus* caused by the stem-bark powder of *J. curcas* was high and observed to be a function of the duration of exposure, but not the concentrations used. At all concentrations (excluding the control – 0.0 g), the stem-bark powder of *J. curcas* demonstrated significant insecticidal activities (92 – 96 %) against *C. maculatus* following a 120 – hour exposure period. At the lowest concentration (1.0 g), the stem-bark powder of *J. curcas* reduced oviposition rate in *C. maculatus* by 65.60 % after 120 hours of mating and oviposition. In conclusion, this study demonstrates the insecticidal and anti-ovipositional activities of the stem-bark powder of *J. curcas* against *C. maculatus* for the first time, and further suggests its usage as a user- and eco-friendly alternative to conventional insecticides in the control of *C. maculatus*.

Keywords: Cowpea, *Jatropha curcas*, *Callosobruchus maculatus*, stem powder, mortality, anti-oviposition

1.0 Introduction

Cowpea, *Vigna unguiculata* L. (Walp) is one of the most important and widely consumed food crops grown in the tropical and sub-tropical regions of the world (Akinkulore, 2012; Uddin and Abdulazeez, 2013). It is also the most important grain in the farming systems of Nigeria and West Africa at large (Singh *et al.*, 2002). Nigeria being the largest producer and consumer, accounts for 61% of its production in Africa and 58% in the world (FAO, 2012). Undoubtedly, cowpea is known to be one of the major sources of protein for teeming populaces in poor tropical countries, accounting for about 60% of protein intake in Nigeria (Ojo *et al.*, 2013). Furthermore, its consumption complements the primarily cereal diets of countries that cultivate it as major food crop (Philips *et al.*, 2003), and also provides a rich source of calories as well as minerals and vitamins. Despite the nutritional and economic

benefits associated with the consumption and production of cowpea, a number of constraints ranging from the lack of adequate storage facilities to the lackadaisical attitude of governments in supplying essential inputs for the support of agricultural activities threaten its continuous production and availability in Nigeria (Uddin and Abdulazeez, 2013). Above all, insect pest infestation constitutes a major constraint in its production and storage (Adebowale and Adedire, 2006).

Callosobruchus maculatus (Fab.) (Coleoptera: Chrysomelidae: Bruchinae) is the most notorious storage pest of cowpea in Nigeria, which starts its attack from the field prior to harvest to storage where the insect population is built up to damaging levels (Ofuya, 2001; Omotoso, 2008). Adult female lays eggs on the seed surface and the hatching larvae burrow into the seed. *Callosobruchus maculatus* larvae feed on the inside of the grains causing weight

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losses up to 80% after six month of storage (Carvalho *et al.*, 2016). Infestation usually affects seed quality, market value and can reduce cowpea seed viability to 2% after 3 months of storage (Adebowale and Adedire, 2006). These losses pose a major threat to food security and future food availability. The control of this pest in storage systems depends primarily on synthetic insecticides such as malathion, pirimiphos-methyl, fenithrithion, methylbromide, deltamethrin and phosphine fumigant (Manzoomi *et al.*, 2010; Ojo *et al.*, 2013; Carvalho *et al.*, 2016). Serious problems of genetic resistance by insect species, pest resurgence, residual toxicity, vertebrate toxicity, widespread environmental hazards and increasing cost of application of the presently used conventional pesticides have resulted in calls for effective, biodegradable pesticides (Rahman and Talukder, 2006; Kedia *et al.*, 2015), hence the increasing interests in the use of natural products of plant origin in the control and management of insect pests. For instance, several studies (e.g. Mbaiguinam *et al.*, 2006; Ileke *et al.*, 2014; Kedia *et al.*, 2015; Iloba *et al.*, 2016; Uyi and Igbinoba, 2016; Uyi and Obi, 2017) have empirically demonstrated the insecticidal, repellent and anti-ovipositional activities of various plant parts or constituents of botanicals against several stored product pests including *C. maculatus* and pronounced their potential for future commercialization as a bio-rational alternative to control the bruchids in stored leguminous grains.

Jatropha curcas L. (Euphorbiaceae) is a multipurpose perennial shrub native to Mexico and subtropical America, but found growing naturally in most tropical areas of the world (Islam *et al.*, 2011). It is an underutilized plant of multiple values, used globally for health care management of plants, humans and domesticated animals (Kumar and Tewari, 2015). Studies on the insecticidal, repellent, anti-feedant and anti-ovipositional activities of various parts of *J. curcas* against pests of agricultural, medical and veterinary importance have been sufficiently investigated (see Rahuman *et al.*, 2008; Silva *et al.*, 2012; Sabbour and Abd-El-Raheem, 2013; Abdoul *et al.*, 2014; Bassem *et al.*, 2014; Suleiman *et al.*, 2014a; Musa and Olaniran, 2015). Furthermore, studies on the molluscicidal, nematicidal, fungicidal, antimicrobial and

antihelminthic activities of the leaf, seed, and/or stem extracts of *J. curcas* are not uncommon (see Liu *et al.*, 1997; Sharma and Trivedi, 2002; Igbinosa *et al.*, 2009; Juliet *et al.*, 2012; Ratnadass and Wink, 2012; Bassem *et al.*, 2014). However, there is paucity of information on the anti-ovipositional and insecticidal activities of the pulverised stems of *J. curcas* against *C. maculatus*. Therefore, this study investigated the insecticidal and anti-ovipositional activities of the stem-bark powder of *J. curcas* against *C. maculatus*.

2.0 Materials and Methods

2.1 Collection and Preparation of Plant Powders

Fresh stem-barks of *J. curcas* were collected locally from a compound in the Uwasota area of Benin City (6°22'50"N, 5°35'52"E), Nigeria. Following collection, the stem-barks were washed, chopped and air dried in the room. The dried stem-barks were blended into fine powder using an electric blender and then preserved in an air-tight and water-proof container pending use.

2.2 Insect Culture

The cowpea seed beetle, *C. maculatus* used to establish the insect culture was obtained from infested cowpea seeds purchased locally from Uselu market in Benin City, Nigeria, and the culture of *C. maculatus* was raised in the laboratory of the Department of Animal and Environmental Biology, University of Benin, Benin City (6°22'59"N, 5°36'5"E). Adult *C. maculatus* (males and females) were separated from the cowpea, placed in three 4 – litre aerated plastic containers (with a perforated screw top lid). Containers (with adult beetles) were kept for six (6) days in the laboratory for mating and oviposition. Following mating and oviposition, adult beetles were sieved from the containers and the eggs laid on the seeds were allowed to develop. The plastic containers were left undisturbed until the emergence of the adult beetles. Freshly emerged subsequent generations were used for the experiments.

2.3 Insect Mortality and Oviposition Rate Bioassay

Clean and un-infested cowpea seeds were purchased from Uselu market, Benin City. The

cowpea seeds were then examined by physical observation for any existing eggs or larvae before the start of the experiments. Different concentrations of the stem-bark powder viz. 0.0 g, 1.0g, 2.0 g and 3.0 g were weighed and each added to 20 g of clean undamaged and un-infested cowpea seeds in transparent 300 ml plastic containers. The cowpea seeds in the controls contained no plant powder. The containers with their contents were gently shaken to ensure thorough admixture after which 5 pairs of 1 – 3 day old sexed adults of *C. maculatus* were introduced into each container. All treatments including the controls were replicated five (5) times. Adult mortality for all treatments (including the control) was observed and recorded for 24, 48, 72, 96 and 120 hours. The insects were considered dead when they failed to respond to touch when the exposed abdomen was probed gently with a pin. Dead adults were removed at each assessment, counted and recorded.

Anti-ovipositional activity was assessed by taking the counts of the number of eggs laid on each grain in the treated and control containers (using a hand lens) after 7 days of mating and oviposition. Percentage of oviposition deterrence was calculated according to Singh (2011) using the formula.

$$POD = \frac{NCS - NTS}{NCS} \times 100$$

where NCS is the number of eggs laid on control seed and NTS is the number of eggs laid on treated seeds

2.4 Statistical analysis

The effects of three concentrations of *J. curcas* leaf powder on the mortality and oviposition rate of *C. maculatus* were analyzed using analysis of variance (ANOVA). The differences among significant treatment means were separated using Turkey's Honest Significant Difference (HSD). The relationships between biopesticide exposure time and insect mortality for all concentrations were established using regression analysis. With the exception of the regression analysis that were performed using Genstat 12.0 (VSN International Limited, United Kingdom) all other analysis were performed using SPSS statistical software, version 20.0 (SPSS, Chicago, USA).

3.0 Results

3.1 Mortality

The stem-bark powder of *J. curcas* caused some levels of toxicological effect against *C. maculatus* compared to the control (Figures 1 – 5). When cowpea beetles were exposed to different treatment levels (0.0, 1.0, 2.0 and 3.0 g) of *J. curcas* stem-bark powder for a 24 – hour period, mortality differed significantly ($F_{3,19} = 7.32; P = 0.003$) with only the control exhibiting the least mortality (Figure 1). However, mortality did not differ between the three stem powder treatments (1.0, 2.0 and 3.0 g) (Figure 1). Following a 48 – hour exposure of the insects to *J. curcas* stem-bark powder, mortality significantly differed ($F_{3,19} = 13.76; P < 0.001$) with only the control exhibiting the least mortality (Figure 2). However, mortality did not differ between the three stem powder treatments (1.0, 2.0 and 3.0 g) (Figure 2). In the 72 – hour exposure trial, the concentration of the stem-bark powder significant influenced the number of dead beetles ($F_{3,19} = 21.88; P < 0.001$). Apart from the control that demonstrated the least mortality, all concentrations (1.0g, 2.0g and 3.0g) demonstrated significant but equal insecticidal activity (72 – 76 %) against the bruchid beetle used in the experiment (Figure 3). Similarly, after exposing the bruchid beetles to different concentrations of *J. curcas* stem-bark powder for 96 hours, percentage mortality differed significantly according to concentration ($F_{3,19} = 48.23; P < 0.001$) (Figure 4) with the 3.0g treatment evoking the highest mortality (98%) followed by 2.0g and 1.0g treatments causing 86% and 80% mortalities respectively in *C. maculatus*. Following a 120 – hour exposure period of *C. maculatus* to different concentrations of *J. curcas* stem-bark powder, percentage mortality differed significantly according to concentration ($F_{3,19} = 81.43; P < 0.001$) with only the control exhibiting the least mortality (Figure 5). However, mortality did not differ between the three stem powder treatments (1.0, 2.0 and 3.0 g) (Figure 5). The 3.0 g treatment exhibiting the highest mortality (96%) followed by 1.0 g and 2.0 g treatments causing 94% and 92% mortalities respectively in *C. maculatus*. Overall, regression analysis revealed that percentage mortality in *C. maculatus* increased with an increase in the exposure duration of the insect pest to the stem-bark powder of *J. curcas* (Figure 6).

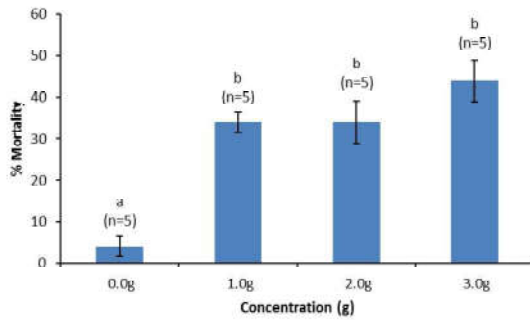


Figure 1: Effects of different concentrations of the stem-bark powder of *Jatropha curcas* on the percentage mortality (mean ± se) of *Callosobruchus maculatus* following a 24 – hour exposure period. Means capped with different letters are significantly different (after Tukey's Honest Significant Difference (HSD) test: $P < 0.05$). Sample sizes are given in parenthesis.

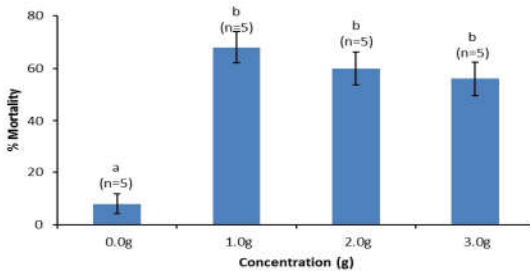


Figure 2: Effects of different concentrations of the stem-bark powder of *Jatropha curcas* on the percentage mortality (mean ± se) of *Callosobruchus maculatus* following a 48 – hour exposure period. Means capped with different letters are significantly different (after Tukey's Honest Significant Difference (HSD) test: $P < 0.05$). Sample sizes are given in parenthesis.

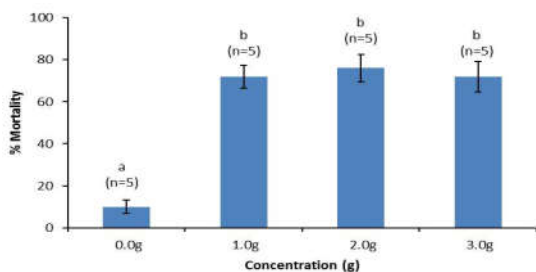


Figure 3: Effects of different concentrations of the stem-bark powder of *Jatropha curcas* on the percentage mortality (mean ± se) of *Callosobruchus maculatus* following a 72 – hour exposure period. Means capped with different letters are significantly different (after Tukey's Honest Significant Difference (HSD) test: $P < 0.05$). Sample sizes are given in parenthesis.

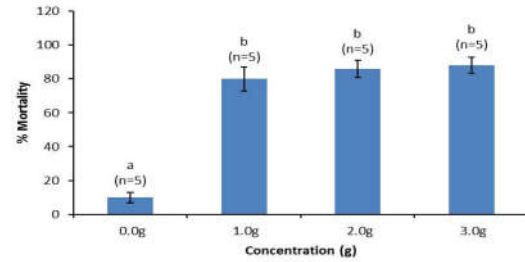


Figure 4: Effects of different concentrations of the stem-bark powder of *Jatropha curcas* on the percentage mortality (mean ± se) of *Callosobruchus maculatus* following a 96 – hour exposure period. Means capped with different letters are significantly different (after Tukey's Honest Significant Difference (HSD) test: $P < 0.05$). Sample sizes are given in parenthesis.

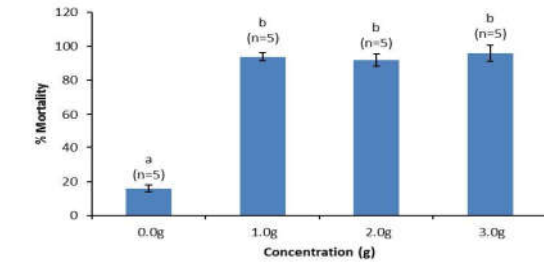


Figure 5: Effects of different concentrations of the stem bark powder of *Jatropha curcas* on the percentage mortality (mean ± se) of *Callosobruchus maculatus* following a 120 – hour exposure period. Means capped with different letters are significantly different (after Tukey's Honest Significant Difference (HSD) test: $P < 0.05$). Sample sizes are given in parenthesis.

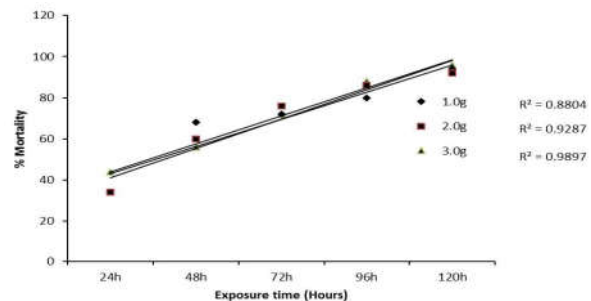


Figure 6: The relationships between the percentage mortality of *Callosobruchus maculatus* and exposure duration at different concentrations of the stem-bark powder of *Jatropha curcas*.

3.2 Oviposition rate

The mean oviposition rate of *C. maculatus* on seeds treated with different concentrations (1.0, 2.0, and 3.0 g) of *J. curcas* stem-bark powder did not differ ($F_{3,19} = 1.92$; $P = 0.167$) as all concentrations excluding the control (0.0g) demonstrated significant anti-ovipositional activities against the test insect (Figure 7). The percentage of oviposition deterrence of the stem-bark powder of *J. curcas* at 1.0, 2.0 and 3.0 g concentrations is given as 65.60, 44.46 and 56.20 % respectively (Figure 7).

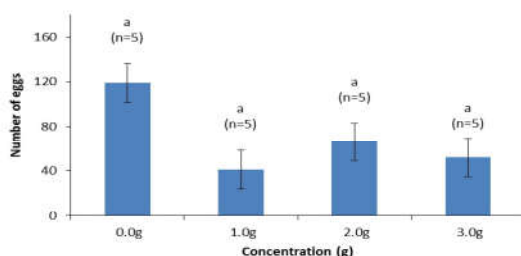


Figure 7: Oviposition rate (mean± se) of *Callosobruchus maculatus* at different treatment levels of *Jatropha curcas* stem-bark powder following 5 days after infestation (DAI). Means capped with the same letters are not significantly different (Tukey's Honestly Significant Difference [HSD] test: $P > 0.05$).

4.0 Discussion and Conclusion

This study examined the toxicological (=insecticidal) activities and oviposition deterrent properties of the stem-bark powder of a multipurpose plant *J. curcas* against an ill-famed pest of cowpea, *C. maculatus*. Results from this current study revealed that the stem-bark powder of *J. curcas* exhibited considerable oviposition deterrent and toxicological activities against the bruchid beetle.

In this study, the percentage mortality of *C. maculatus* was observed to be independent of the concentrations of *J. curcas* stem-bark powder used, as all concentrations demonstrated significant toxicological activities (92–96%) against the bruchid beetle following a 120-hour exposure period. This result corroborates with the findings of other authors (Suleiman *et al.*, 2014b; Olufumilayo, 2015; Ofuya *et al.*, 2015; Iloba *et al.*, 2016; Opuba *et al.*, 2018) who reported significant mortalities in *C. maculatus* when cowpea grains were treated with different

concentrations of either plant powders or extracts. As observed in other studies (Kouninki, 2010; Iloba *et al.*, 2016; Uyi and Igbinoba, 2016; Uyi and Obi, 2017; Opuba *et al.*, 2018), percentage mortality of *C. maculatus* in this current study, increased with an increase in the exposure period of the pest to the stem-bark powder of *J. curcas*. The lack of a significant difference in the mortality of *C. maculatus* when exposed to cowpea grains treated with different concentrations (1.0g, 2.0g, and 3.0g) of *J. curcas* stem-bark powder reveals the excellent pesticidal properties of the plant part (stem-bark).

Although, empirical evidences on the oviposition deterrent properties of several plant powders, extracts and/or seed oils including that of *J. curcas* exist against *C. maculatus* (see Adebowale and Adedire, 2006; Singh, 2011; Ojo *et al.*, 2013; Adesina and Ofuya, 2015; Iloba *et al.*, 2016), to our knowledge, studies focusing on the oviposition deterrent property of the stem-bark powder of *J. curcas* are still scarce and possibly non-existent. In this study, all the concentrations (1.0, 2.0, and 3.0g) of *J. curcas* stem-bark powder used demonstrated some degrees of anti-ovipositional activity (44.46–65.60%) against *C. maculatus* following 120 hours of mating and oviposition. This result is in accordance with the findings of Iloba *et al.*, (2016) where the authors revealed a significant reduction in the oviposition rate of *C. maculatus* at all the concentrations of *Greenwayodendron suaveolens* (Engl. and Diels) Verdc. (Annonaceae) leaf powder used. In addition, the remarkable reduction in the oviposition rate of *C. maculatus* observed in this study further concurs with the findings of Adebowale and Adedire (2006) who examined the effect of *J. curcas* seed oil on the egg laying capacity of *C. maculatus*. The authors documented a significant reduction in fecundity of *C. maculatus* females when cowpea seeds were treated with seed oil of *J. curcas*.

A number of explanations might exist for the results (i.e. high mortality and reduced oviposition) observed in this study. Firstly, the sequence of behaviour of insect pest especially in females while ovipositing makes them prone to acquiring toxic residues from treated surfaces (Ogunwolu and Idowu, 1994). Secondly, plant powders are

characterized by the presence of fine particles which might block the spiracles of the insect thus leading to death by suffocation (Denloye, 2010). Thirdly, plants are characterized by the presence of bioactive compounds which have been documented to alter the physiology and metabolism of insect pests consequently, reducing their egg laying capacity (Aku *et al.*, 1998; Kedia, 2015). Despite all of these, we attribute the high mortality of, and reduced oviposition in *C. maculatus* to the presence of secondary metabolites (=phytochemicals) such as saponins, steroids, tannins, glycosides, alkaloids and flavonoids in the stem of *J. curcas* (Igbinsosa *et al.*, 2009; Nayak and Patel, 2010; Ahirrao *et al.*, 2011) as these compounds have been documented to be toxic to insect pests including those of stored products (see Chaieb, 2010; Ekeh *et al.*, 2013; Agaba and Fawole, 2014). In summary, this present study has clearly demonstrated that the stem-bark powder of *J. curcas* possesses insecticidal and anti-oviposition properties that can be employed in the management of *C. maculatus* infestation on stored cowpea seeds.

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