



ASH AND MICRONUTRIENT CONTENT OF *MORINGA OLIEFERA* (L.) LEAVES IN RELATION TO PROCESSING METHODS AND LEAF AGE

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ABSTRACT

This investigation focused on evaluating the proximate composition of *Moringa oliefera* leaves in relation to the leaf age, and processing methods in Zaria, northwestern Nigeria using analytical methods described by AOAC (2005). Proximate contents generally ranged in the following pattern. Ash (4.20-6.60%), iron (193.00-338.00 ppm), zinc (0.00-360.00 ppm), copper (3.00-7.77 ppm), and Manganese (21.00-87.00 ppm). Ash content of leaves decreased significantly with processing methods and but increased with age. Iron content of leaves increased significantly with processing methods and age. Manganese content of leaves increased significantly with processing methods and age. Copper content of leaves decreased significantly with processing methods and age. Zinc was not detected in mature or cooked leaves. Results suggested that micronutrients are most retained in mature leaves that are consumed raw, or at best blanched rather than cooked for prolonged periods.

Key words: Ash, micronutrients, *Moringa oliefera*, processing, leaf age

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