

### ***Costus afer* Ker Gawl. (Costaceae): A review on its potential anti-inflammatory**

#### **Abstract**

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), more than 80% of the population in Africa in general and in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in particular, relies on traditional medicine to solve their primary health care problems. In this study, we examined the relevance of *Costus afer* Ker Gawl, a plant called ginger lily, spiral ginger or bush cane. It is believed to be used in traditional medicine practice (TMP) to treat and manage many conditions including diabetes mellitus, stomach ailments, arthritis, inflammation... These alleged traditional uses have prompted many researchers to conduct studies on the plant to amass scientific evidence. However, these results are sparse, and thus, an inventory through the present search using online search engines such as Google Scholar, PubMed, Scienced, Web of Science, Scopus and Chemical Abstracts for the period from 1990 to 2021; provides a comprehensive update on the plant, covering its traditional uses, phytochemical and nutritional constituents, pharmacological activities and toxicological effects. The online search included the use of the keywords, "*Costus afer* Ker-Gawl" or "*Costus afer*". It should be noted that the stem and leaves of the plant contain consistent amounts of micronutrients and macronutrients. The leaves, stem, rhizomes of *C. afer* contain several steroidal sapogenins, aferosides, dioscin and paryphyllin C and a flavonoid glycoside, kaempferol-3-O- $\alpha$ -L-rhamnopyranoside. Experimental studies on various parts of the plant have shown biological activities such as anti-hyperglycemic, hepatocellular protection, cardioprotection, nephroprotection, CNS depressant, analgesic, antiarthritis, antibacterial and antioxidant. This wide range of biological properties of *Costus afer* Ker Gawl would be largely attributed to the essential oil compounds such as Sabinene,  $\beta$ -pinene and  $\beta$ -caryophyllene which are among the major compounds of this plant. Based on these obvious data, it is concluded that the plant could be used as an alternative and complementary therapy for many diseases related to oxidative stress so will guide us future research on the use of *Costus afer* Ker Gawl as an anti-inflammatory phytomedicine.

**Keywords:** anti-inflammatory, Diosgenin, *Costus afer* Ker Gawl, Anti-spasmodic activity, phytomedicine

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

### 1.1. Background

Considered a primary physiological defense mechanism, inflammation helps the body protect itself against infection, burns, toxic chemicals, allergens, or other harmful stimuli. When uncontrolled and persistent, inflammation can act as an etiological factor for many of these chronic diseases [1]. Although it is a defense mechanism, the complex events and mediators involved in the inflammatory response can induce, maintain or worsen many diseases [2]. Currently consumed anti-inflammatory drugs are associated with some serious side effects. Therefore, the development of potent anti-inflammatory drugs with fewer side effects is needed.

The pathophysiological pathways essential for drug targeting are currently: the metabolism of arachidonic acid; the complement cascade; phagocytosis and other cellular functions; autoimmune processes; protein kinase C and other enzymes involved in second messenger systems [3]. It is recently known that early inflammatory changes in damaged tissues involve the release of various biologically active materials from polymorphic nuclear leukocytes, lysosomal enzymes and the like. The vascular effects are mainly mediated by kinins, prostaglandins and vasoactive amines (e.g. histamine, released by mast cells), which lead to increased vascular permeability thus leading to plasma exudation.

The inflammatory process involves a complex interplay between red blood cells, the blood vessels themselves and the cells of the tissue involved. This process can be seen as a coordinated response of a large number of cells to an initial stimulus [4].

The immigrant cells exert little effect by their mere presence, but initiate the entire complex inflammatory response due to the materials they secrete or release into the extracellular environment. These materials include molecules that exacerbate the response by attracting more inflammatory cells, inhibitors that serve to reduce the severity of reactions, histotoxic agents such as proteases, oxygen metabolites and cations, and signals to cells. inflammatory and surrounding tissues to implement all or part of the complex reactions of which they are capable [4].

It is not desirable for uncontrolled inflammation to continue. Reversible features such as pain, redness, warmth and swelling are joined by a less transient fifth feature, namely loss of function of the affected organs. ultimately, control of inflammation is sought to protect bodily function [5, 6].

Various experimental models are used to assess inflammation in the field of inflammation research. The usual methods for determining whether compounds have anti-inflammatory activity is to test them against animal and biochemical models of inflammation. There is no experimental model of inflammation covering all aspects of inflammation [7].

Experimental models for assessing inflammation can be divided into two broad classes: (1) acute inflammation models and (2) chronic inflammation models. Acute models test drugs that modulate blood flow (erythema), changes in vascular permeability, leukocyte migration and chemotaxis, phagocytosis - PMNL and other phagocytic cells, measurement of local pain, antipyretic activity, local analgesic action and rat paw edema. Chronic models find drugs that can modulate the disease process, including sponge and pellet implants and granuloma pockets that deposit granulation tissue, adjuvant-induced arthritis, and rabbit monoarticular arthritis that has an immune etiology [7]. Experimental inflammation in the whole animal is the usual starting point for anti-inflammatory testing. These experiments are varied and widely used, especially the rat paw edema test. It can be adapted in several ways using different inflammatory agents to try to mimic pathological inflammation and arthritis [3].

The search for alternative sources of anti-inflammatories is of primary interest to research institutes, pharmaceutical companies, etc. [8]. These are the adverse side effects experienced by patients with rheumatoid arthritis after using synthetic steroidal or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). In addition, the World Health Organization has reported that NSAIDs are often associated with drug-induced toxic effects or adverse side effects during long-term use [9, 10]. Additionally, alternative sources of plant-derived anti-inflammatory drugs are readily accessible, available, and affordable and contain bioactive compounds of therapeutic value.

*Costus afer* (*C. afer*) Ker Gawl. usually known as gingerlily or bush cane belongs to the Family of *Zingiberaceae* now known as *Costaceae*. It is one of the 150 species of tall, perennial, and rhizomatous herbs [11]. *C. afer* is commonly found in moist or shady forests and riverbanks of tropical West Africa. It is often used as a medicinal herb throughout tropical Africa, especially in treating inflammation, rheumatism, arthritis, cough, hepatic disorders, helminthic, miscarriages, epileptic attack and hemorrhoids. In addition, it is used as laxative, diuretics, and had served as an antidote for poison [12-14]. In Nigeria, the plant extract is used as medicament to treat goats with retained placenta [10].

The rhizomes of *C. afer* contain several steroidal sapogenins (diosgenin), aferosides, dioscin and paryphyllin C and flavonoid glycoside kaempferol 3-O- $\alpha$ -L-rhamnopyranoside [11]. Sesquiterpenoids are the most abundant group of volatile compounds in the essential oil of the leaf [11]. The chloroform and methanol extracts from the aerial parts reduced carrageenan-induced rat paw oedema [6], while extracts of *C. afer* stem and leaves exhibited antioxidant and hepatoprotective activities [17, 18].

The present literature review was undertaken in order to provide a comprehensive summary and reviews of recently published literature concerning the ethnopharmacological use, phytochemistry, biological and pharmacological activities as well as toxicological research of *Costus afer* and its components with a view to its integration into a future research program on the screening of tropical plants (TPSR) for its anti-inflammatory properties mainly on humans. This review aims to also provide information as a basis for the further development and use of this herbal resource.

## 1.2. Classification [19-20]

Scientific Name: *Costus afer* (*C. afer*) Ker Gawl

Kingdom: *Plantae* – Plants

Subkingdom: *Tracheobionta* -Vascular plants

Superdivision: *Spermatophyta*

Classe : *Equisetopsida*

Ordre: *Zingiberales*

Famille: *Costaceae*

Genre: *Costus*

Espèce: *Costus afer*

## 1.3. Taxonomy, Ethnic Names, and Ethnopharmacological Importance.

*Costus afer* Ker-Gawl belongs to the domain Eukaryota, kingdom Plantae, and the family *Zingiberaceae* now known as *Costaceae* [21]. It is of the genus *Costus* and species *afer* [22].

## 1.4. Botanic Description

*C. afer* is a tropical, herbaceous, rhizomatous, monocotyledonous and relatively tall, unbranched plant belonging to the family *Costaceae*. It is commonly found in moist or shady forests in West and tropical Africa [23].

*C. afer* is a perennial, rhizomatous herb that can attain a height up to 4m. Leaves are arranged spirally, simple and entire. Sheath is tubular, closed, green with purple blotches; ligule 4-8mm long, leathery and glabrous; petiole is 4-12mm long; blade is elliptical to obovate, 15-35cm x 3.5-9.5 cm, base is rounded to subcordate, apex is acuminate, margin is sparsely hairy, usually glabrous above, sometimes shortly hairy beneath. Inflorescence is a

very compact, terminal, conical spike 2.5-7.5cm long, sessile; bracts is oblong, convex, 3.5cm long, densely imbricate, upper ones often smaller, apex is truncate to rounded, green with purple markings, each subtending 2 flowers; bracteoles is boat-shaped, 2.5cm x 1cm, keel is thick and ridged, pale green with pink markings and thin pink papery margin. Flowers are bisexual and zygomorphic, calyx tube 1.5–2 cm long, teeth  $\pm$  5 mm long, triangular, margin pink; Corolla tube  $\pm$  2 cm long, hairy inside, enclosed in bract, lobes oblong to ovate, 3–4 cm long, cucullate at apex, transparent to white, lip (lip) broadly triangular, funnel-shaped,  $\pm$  2.5 cm  $\times$  2.5 cm, opposite the stamen, white or pink tinted towards the edge and with an orange-yellow center line down to the base of the tube. the corolla; stamen 1, free, petaloid, oval,  $\pm$  3 cm  $\times$  1 cm, entire, white, anther  $\pm$  7 mm long, attached in the middle to the fillet; ovary inferior, 3-celled, style 1, filiform. Fruit: ellipsoid capsule about 1 cm long, loculicidal, many-seeded and Seeds black, with aril [23-24].



(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)



(e)



(f)

**Figure 1:** Whole plant (a), Leaves, fruit and flowers (b), Fruit and leaves (c), Flowers (d), stem (e) and rhizomes of *Costus afer*

### 1.5. Origin and geographic distribution

In Africa, *C. afer* is found in the forest belt from Senegal to Ethiopia and in the East to Tanzania, Malawi and Angola, in the South and in West Africa. It is common plant in Nigeria,

Ghana, Togo, and Cameroun. It is often planted in home garden for medicinal purposes. *C. afer* is pantropical and comprises of about 70 species, which about 40 species are found in tropical America, about 25 in tropical Africa and about 5 in South-East Asia [19-23].

### 1.6. Ecology

*Costus afer* occurs in humid areas of forests and forest edges, up to 1400 m altitude. In southern Nigeria *Costus afer* is a weed of rice fields. In cultivation, it requires a rich, moist and well-drained soil (you need two parts of sphagnum for one part of silt and one part of extra-siliceous sand). It does well in shady to direct sunlight [19-23].

### 1.7. Propagation and planting

Propagation of *Costus afer* can be done by seed as well as by stem or rhizome cuttings. These stems and rhizomes are cut into 2.5 cm long sections and planted in a mixture of sand and sphagnum. Successful in vitro multi-shoot cultures of *Costus afer* were retained; after one year of liquid paraffin storage, high survival rates (70–100%) were observed, and even after two years, 75% of *Costus afer* cultures remained viable [19-23].

## 2. METHODOLOGY

A literature search was conducted to obtain information about the phytochemistry and pharmacognosy of *Costus afer* Ker Gawl. from various electronic databases (Scifinders, Pubmed NCBI, Qwant, Scopus, Wiley, PubMed Central, Web science, Science Direct and Google scholar). The scientific name of this plant species was used as the keyword for the search [<http://www.ville-ge.ch/musinfo/bd/cjb/africa/index.php?langue=en/>; [Plants of the World Online | Kew Science](#); [Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew: Medicinal Plant Names Services](#); [PROTA, Introduction — PlantUse Français \(plantnet-project.org\)](#); <http://www.theplantlist.org/> et [CJB - Search Africa \(ville-ge.ch\)](#)], along with the terms Phytochemistry and pharmacognosy. The chemical structures of the *Costus afer* naturally occurring compounds were drawn using PubChem and ChemBioDraw Ultra 15.0 software package.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1. Traditional use and ethnopharmacology

In traditional medicine, the plant has several uses, which are summarized in Table 1. The pharmacological importance that is attached to the use of the plant has led to numerous scientific research publications.

UNDER PEER REVIEW

**Table 1:** Ethnomedicinal uses of *Costus afer*

Country	Vernacular names	Part uses	Local uses	Ref.
Nigeria	Irekeomede, Tete-egun (Yoruba), Ogbodou (Ijaw), Opete or okpete, Ejula (Igbo), Kakizawa, Dodon kodi (Hausa)	Stem	Inflammation, Arthritis	[24,25,16,26]
		Leaves	Measles	[25]
		Rhizome	Malaria	[27]
Ghana	Osommbaa (Fante), Somme (Asante), Asumbae (Ewe)	Rhizome	CNS depression, Laxative	[25,28,29,30]
		Stem	Chicken pox, Influenza	[31]
		Leaves	Oligospermia	[15]
Cameroon	Mwandando (Douala), Mandanwany (Bakweri), Nmian (Bulu)	Leaves and stem	Fodder	[25]
		Rhizome	Purgative	[25]
Senegal	Bumay (Fogny), Sungho (Dan), Zazaboto (Guere), Doi (Kru-bete)	Stem	Diuretic	[29,25,26]
		Stem, leaves and rhizome	Diabetes mellitus	[26]
		Leaves	Wound healing	[27]
Ivory Coast	Dodre (Guere do), Zazaboto (Guere),	Rhizome	Gastric ulcer	[29,20]
		Stem	Aperient	[33]
		Leaves	Jaundice	[27]
Sierra Leone	Tofa (Kono), Dan (Loko), Sungho (Dan)	Leaves	Fever	[29,27]
		Rhizome	Leprosy	[25]
		Leafy stem	Ear infection	[37]
Togo	Ukhueruohâ (Edo)	Leaves	Colic, Miscarriage	[34,29,27]
		Rhizome	Toothache	[25]
		Stem	Gonorrhea, Genital herpes	[15, 32]
Guinea-Bissau	Gogodje-suto (Fula-pulaar)	Leaves	Hypertension, Helminthic, Hepatic disorder	[25,34,14,27]
		Stem	Hemorrhoids	[25]
		Leaves, stem and rhizome	Aphrodisiac	[36]
DR Congo	Minkuisa (Kikongo)	Leaves and stem	Arthritis	[15, 25,29,27]
		Stem, aerial parts	Cough, sore throat	[15,26]
		Leafy stem	Conjunctivitis	[32]
		Leaves	Stomach ache, Hepatic disorder	[27]



### 3.2. Phytochemistry Composition

It has been found that the leaves, barks and rhizomes of *Costus afer* can be considered a good source of minerals, lipids, carbohydrates, proteins, fibers and moisture, which is beneficial for human health [38-40]. Tables 2-4 show the proximal composition of leaves, bark and rhizome of *Costus afer*.

**Table 2:** Proximate compositions of different part of *Costus afer* [38-40]

Parameter	Values (%)		
	Leaf	Stem	Rhizome
Moisture	18.63 ± 2.11	6.76 ± 0.67	71.1 ± 0.011
Total Ash	11.47 ± 1.47	10.91 ± 0.50	13.0 ± 0.06
Crude Protein	2.75 ± 0.56	2.93 ± 1.16	12.5 ± 0.021
Crude Fat	1.83 ± 0.43	1.75 ± 0.48	2.1 ± 0.005
Crude Fiber	21.16 ± 0.86	27.28 ± 1.54	45.2 ± 0.004
Total Carbohydrate	55.83 ± 3.71	50.38 ± 1.27	16.4 ± 0.003

**Table 3:** Mineral composition of the leaf, stem and rhizome of *Costus afer* [38-40]

Parameter (mg/100g)	Values (%)		
	Leaf	Stem	Rhizome
Calcium	418 ± 0.000	500 ± 0.004	350 ± 0.002
Iron	1.35 ± 0.001	1.37 ± 0.001	2.5 ± 0.006
Sodium	11.5 ± 0.050	21.5 ± 0.003	12.2 ± 0.001
Phosphorus	55.5 ± 0.020	66 ± 0.005	18 ± 0.010
Potassium	201 ± 0.002	211 ± 0.001	113 ± 0.003
Magnesium	40.1 ± 0.012	36.4 ± 0.015	28.2 ± 0.012

**Table 4:** Anti-nutrient composition of the leaf, stem and rhizome of *Costus afer* [38-40]

Parameter (mg/100g)	Values (%)		
	Leaf	Stem	Rhizome
Tannin	0.05±0.001	0.16 ± 0.001	0.01 ± 0.002
Saponin	1.65±0.001	1.80 ± 0.001	0.85 ± 0.006
Oxalate	3.5±0.050	3.0 ± 0.003	2.5 ± 0.001
Cyanogenic glycosides	35.7±0.020	18.90 ± 0.005	13.6 ± 0.010

Several phytochemicals such as saponins, tannins, alkaloids, steroids, cardioglycosides, flavonoids and terpenoids have been identified in *Costus afer* stem extract [40-41].

Diosgenin is a very important raw material found in *C. afer* used as a precursor in the synthesis of a number of steroid drugs including corticosteroids, sex hormones, oral contraceptive and anabolic agents. The rhizome also contains the saponins aferosides A-C, as well as diosgenin, parphyllin c and flavonoid glycoside kaempferol-3-O- $\alpha$ -L-rhamnopyranoside [42].

**Table 5.** Fatty acid composition of *Costus afer* stem

Compounds	<i>Costus afer</i>	
	Retention time (min)	Composition (%)
Caprylic acid (C8:0)	8.908	0.00
Capric acid (C10:0)	10.363	0.00
Lauric acid (C12:0)	12.100	0.00
Myristic acid (C14:0)	13.743	0.02
Palmitic acid (C16:0)	15.160	25.48
Palmitoleic acid (C16:1)	16.248	2.06
Margaric acid (C17:0)	17.230	0.00
Stearic acid (C18:0)	18.057	6.37
Oleic acid (C18:1)	18.844	7.11
Linoleic acid (C18:2)	19.523	25.90
Linolenic acid (C18:3)	21.824	32.27
Arachidonic acid (C20:0)	22.359	0.52
Arachidonic acid (C20:4)	23.234	0.00
Behenic acid	23.970	0.20
Erucic acid	24.793	0.00
Lignoceric acid	25.619	0.07
Total fatty acids		100.00

**Table 6.** Alkaloid composition of *Costus afer* stem

Compounds	<i>Costus afer</i>	
	Retention time (min)	Composition (mg/100 g)
Morphine	12.412	12.65
Methyl morphine	13.794	16.41
Papaverine	15.111	31.56
Biflorin	15.722	0.01
Narcotine	16.368	9.96
Daphnoline	16.664	0.00
Aromoline	18.042	0.00
Homoaromoline	18.988	0.00
Ambelline	19.665	0.00
6-Hydroxybuphanidine	20.599	0.00
Monocrotalline	21.251	0.00
6-Hydroxypowelline	21.794	0.00
Nitidine	22.559	0.00
Total alkaloids		70.59

**Table 7.** Saponin composition of *Costus afer* stem

Compounds	<i>Costus afer</i>	
	Retention time (min)	Composition (mg/100 g)
Gitogenin	17.545	0.08
Solagenin	18.588	0.01
Diosgenin	19.516	0.75
Tigogenin	20.115	0.28

Neohecogenin	20.979	0.00
Hecogenin	21.819	0.00
Sapogenin	22.600	1.12
Euphol	24.185	0.00
Saponine	25.480	0.63
Total saponins		2.87

**Table 8.** Flavonoid composition of *Costus afer* stem

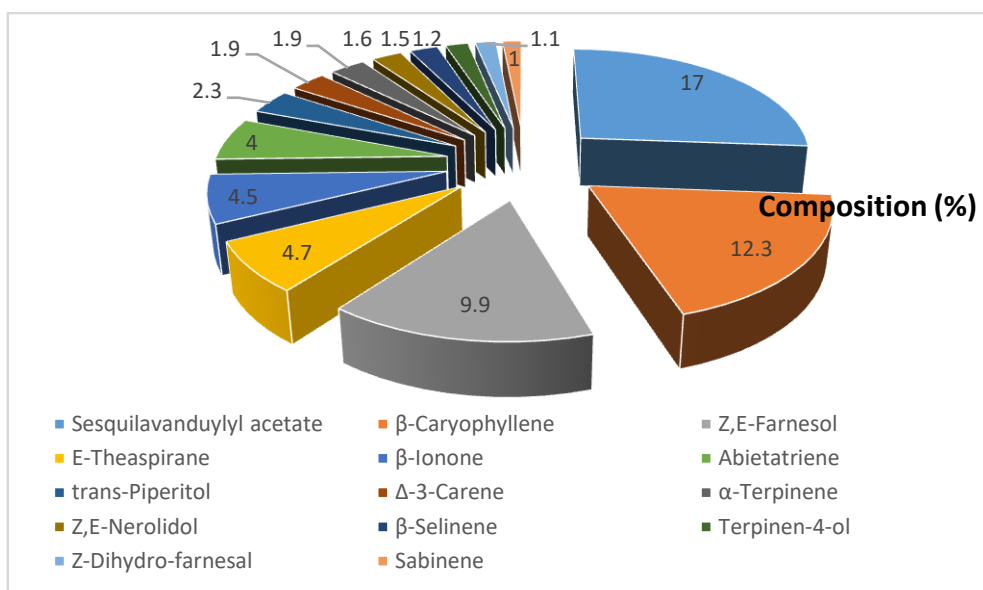
Compounds	<i>Costus afer</i>	
	Retention time (min)	Composition (mg/100 g )
Catechin	13.549	0.00
Resveratrol	14.904	0.00
Apigenin	16.036	0.92
Daidzein	16.246	0.06
Butein	16.458	0.00
Naringenin	16.671	0.00
Biochanin	17.357	0.00
Luteolin	17.769	0.07
Kaempferol	18.050	2.77
Epicatechin	19.395	0.00
Salvagenin	20.467	0.00
Epicatechin-3-gallate	21.501	0.00
Galocatechin	22.065	0.00
Quercetin	22.597	4.21
Isorhamnetin	23.471	0.00
Myricetin	23.965	19.75
Sinensetin	24.997	0.00
Kaempferol-3-arabinoside	25.360	0.00
Naringenin	26.041	0.00
Quercitrin	27.294	0.04
Isoquercetin	27.480	0.07
Orientin	27.910	0.00
Rutin	28.195	0.39
Isoorientin	28.529	0.02
Total flavonoids		28.29

Table 9 gives the composition of the essential oil of *Costus afer* Ker-Gawl. Sesquilandryl acetate (A: 17.0%) is the most abundant compound, followed by  $\beta$ -Caryophyllene (B: 12.3%), Z,E-Farnesol (C: 9.9%), E-Theaspirane (D: 4.7%),  $\beta$ -Ionone (E: 4.5%), Abietatriene (F: 4.0%), trans-Piperitol (G: 2.3%),  $\Delta$ -3-Carene (H: 1.9%),  $\alpha$ -Terpinene (I:1.9%), Z,E-Nerolidol (J: 1.6%),  $\beta$ -Selinene (K: 1.5%), Terpinen-4-ol (L:1.2%), Z-Dihydro-farnesal (M:1.1%), sabinene (N: 1.0%). These compounds constitute 64.9% of the composition of the essential oil of plant, the other compounds constitute only 35.1%. The presence of these major compounds such as  $\beta$ -caryophyllene,  $\beta$ -Ionone and  $\alpha$ -Terpinene would be the basis of several pharmacological properties such as anti-inflammatory, anti-cancer.... [16].

**Table 9.** Leaf essential oil composition of *Costus afer* Ker–Gawl [16]

Peak No. <sup>a</sup>	Compound	KI	Composition (%)	Method of identification <sup>b</sup>
1.	$\alpha$ -Thujene	927	0.8	RI, MS
2.	$\alpha$ -Pinene	938	0.6	RI, MS
3.	Sabinene	958	1.0	RI, MS
4.	$\beta$ -Pinene	977	0.9	RI, MS
5.	$\Delta$ -3-Carene	1050	1.9	RI, MS
6.	$\alpha$ -Terpinene	1050	1.9	RI, MS
7.	Terpinen-4-ol	1172	1.2	RI, MS
8.	<i>trans</i> -Piperitol	1289	2.3	RI, MS
9.	Geranial	129	0.4	RI, MS
10.	Z-Theaspirane	1297	0.5	RI, MS
11.	E-Theaspirane	1375	4.7	RI, MS
12.	$\beta$ -Caryophyllene	1401	12.3	RI, MS
13.	Ui <sup>c</sup>	1401	12.3	RI, MS
14.	$\beta$ -Ionone	1434	4.5	RI, MS
15.	$\beta$ -Selinene	1478	1.5	RI, MS
16.	Z-Dihydro-farnesal	1499	1.1	RI, MS
17.	Z,E-Nerolidol	1527	1.6	RI, MS
18.	Z-Dihydro-farnesol	1575	0.6	RI, MS
19.	Caryophyllene oxide	1582	0.5	RI, MS
20.	Z,E-Farnesol	1611	9.9	RI, MS
21.	Z,Z-Farnesol	1631	0.4	RI, MS
22.	Ui <sup>c</sup>	1648	0.7	RI, MS
23.	Ui <sup>c</sup>	1681	0.4	RI, MS
24.	Ui <sup>c</sup>	1684	0.3	RI, MS
25.	Z-Dehydro-apo-farnesol	1687	0.6	RI, MS
26.	Ui <sup>c</sup>	1690	0.9	RI, MS
27.	Ui <sup>c</sup>	1712	0.9	RI, MS
28.	Ui <sup>c</sup>	1727	12.9	RI, MS
29.	Z-Citronellyl tiglate	1731	2.6	RI, MS
30.	E-Citronellyl tiglate	1749	0.7	RI, MS
31.	Methyl linoleate	1798	0.8	RI, MS
32.	$\beta$ -Acoradienol	1802	1.4	RI, MS
33.	Sesquilavanduylyl acetate	1809	17.0	RI, MS
34.	Ui <sup>c</sup>	1886	1.0	RI, MS
35.	Ui <sup>c</sup>	2018	1.7	RI, MS
36.	Abietatriene	2153	4.0	RI, MS
37.	Ui <sup>c</sup>	2268	1.3	RI, MS
38.	Ui <sup>c</sup>	2376	0.3	RI, MS

<sup>a</sup>GC Peak number (elution order on Cpsil 5 capillary column) (BP 1).<sup>c</sup>Identification by KI and using the mass spectral data in the literature.<sup>d</sup>Unidentified compound.



**Figure 2.** Distribution of essential oil compounds of *Costus afer* Ker-Gawl

**Figure 3:** Chemical structures of some selected phytochemicals from different parts of *Costus afer*

**Table 10.** Vitamin compositions in *C. afer* (mg/100 g) [42]

Vitamins	Composition (mg/100 g)
Vitamin A	0.48±0.02
Vitamin D	0.09±0.01
Vitamin E	265.67±5.49
Vitamin B1	0.53±0.03
Vitamin B2	1.28±0.07
Vitamin B3	0.43±0.03
Vitamin B6	0.55±0.04
Vitamin B12	0.07±0.00
Vitamin C	3.27±0.09

**Table 11.** Mineral composition of *C. afer* leaf and stem Mineral [42]

Mineral element	Composition (mg/100 g)	
	Leaf (mg/kg)	Stem (mg/kg)
Calcium	7.69±1.12	7.92±0.25
Magnesium	4.01±1.25	3.64±1.15
Potassium	1.02±0.34	0.95±0.03
Sodium	1.97±0.12	2.25±1.07
Chromium	0.07±0.01	0.10±0.05
Lead	0.01±0.00	0.02±0.00
Manganese	0.82±0.02	0.75±0.12
Nickel	0.17±0.01	0.12±0.05
Copper	0.44±0.02	0.52±0.11

### 3.3. Pharmacological Activities of *Costus afer*

#### *Analgesic and Anti-Inflammatory Effects*

Inflammation is a complex process initiated by several factors related to harmful physical or chemical stimuli or microbiological toxins. The inflammatory response aims to inactivate or destroy invading organisms, remove irritants, and set the stage for tissue repair [43].

Certain regular occurrences, such as redness, swelling, warmth, and pain usually characterize inflammation, sometimes leading to exudation and loss of function. The process of inflammation involves several inflammatory events and mediators which are potent chemicals found in body tissues, such as prostaglandins, leukotrienes, prostacyclins, lymphokines, and chemokines such as interferon- $\alpha$  (IFN- $\alpha$ ), IFN- $\gamma$ , interleukin (IL)-1, IL-8, histamine, 5-hydroxytryptamine (5-HT) and tumor necrosis factor- $\alpha$  (TNF- $\alpha$ ) [44]. According to the modern concept, inflammation is a healthy process resulting from a disturbance or disease. To overcome this problem, various types of safe and effective anti-inflammatory agents are available, such as aspirin and other nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, and many other drugs are under development. Although steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs and NSAIDs are currently used to treat acute inflammation, these drugs have not been completely successful in curing chronic inflammatory disorders, and most of them carry an increased risk of blood clotting, causing heart attacks and strokes. Reports suggest that nearly 90% of drugs used for inflammation produce drug-related toxicities, iatrogenic reactions, and adverse effects that complicate the treatment process [45]. As a result, there has been a shift in the field of anti-inflammatory treatment from the use of synthetic products to natural therapy. The development of powerful anti-inflammatories from natural products has long been considered. Natural resources provide a rich base for the discovery of new drugs due to their chemical diversity. Medicinal plants, including those particularly used for their aromatic properties (herbs), such as spices and vegetables, are of great importance in primary health care in many developing countries.

The use of aromatic plants depends on the content and composition of their active compounds. Most of these compounds can be described as secondary metabolites, such as terpenoids, carotenoids, phenolic acids, flavonoids, coumarins, glucosinolates, and alkaloids, which are naturally present in plants and act as a protective mechanism against predators, pathogens, and competitors [46]. Some of these compounds, such as phenolic acids, flavonoids, and diterpenes, are known to have potential human health benefits. Africa is blessed with a large number of vegetables, fruits and spices that are consumed for their nutrients or for medicinal purposes. In traditional African medicine, many edible fruits and spices are considered effective in relieving pain.

Scientific evidence is mounting that many of these herbs and spices do have medicinal properties that relieve inflammatory conditions. A growing body of research has shown that commonly used herbs and spices, such as cloves, ginger, rosemary, turmeric and garlic, have anti-inflammatory properties that, in some cases, can be therapeutic. Many researchers have focused on spices and vegetables, and a number of species have been studied for their anti-inflammatory and antinociceptive potential [47, 48].

Alkaloids have known anti-inflammatory effects. Flavonoids and phenolic compounds are powerful antioxidants that prevent oxidative cell damage and also have anti-inflammatory, anti-allergic and anti-thrombotic properties. Proanthocyanidins are a type of bioflavonoid with very powerful antioxidant activity. Previous studies have also shown that plant extracts with anti-inflammatory properties may contain phytochemicals with antioxidant activity against deleterious chain reactions triggered by reactive oxygen species associated with inflammation [49].

The hexane fraction of *C. afer* leaves (CAHLF) exhibited a substantial anti-inflammatory activity *in vivo* which could be possibly through inhibition of prostaglandin synthesis and scavenging of perpetuating ROS generated during inflammation. Thus, CAHLF could be considered as an important source of anti-inflammatory compounds for pharmaceutical drug development [50].

Analgesic is used as a painkiller without blocking any nerve impulse conduction, altering sensory perception nor affecting consciousness. Some of the methods employed in evaluating analgesic property include acetic acid-induced writhing, the tail flick assay, and the tail immersion assay [40]. The effects of *Costus afer* Leaf Extract (CALE) and *Costus afer* Stem Juice (CASJ) were significantly ( $P < 0.05$ ) different from the negative control group and compared favorably with the effects of Aspirin. The experiments therefore indicate that CALE and CASJ could contain principles with strong antinociceptive properties and raises in the search for new antinociceptive agents with minimal side effects and high potency for the management of pain related body diseases [51].

The results presented here regarding analgesic and anti-inflammatory experiments seem to provide evidence to support the traditional use of *C. afer* extract for the relief of pain and inflammation in the management of arthritis. Implicitly, the plant could be considered as a drug candidate in the development of drugs for pain and inflammation.

### **Antioxidant activities**

The free radical scavenging activity of the extracts with 2,2-Diphenyl-1-picrylhydrazyl (DPPH) using thin layer chromatography and the Ferric Reducing Antioxidant Power (FRAP) were found to be positive. The aqueous extracts of the different parts of the plant had a higher free radical scavenging activity (FRAP) than the other extracts. For DPPH, the methanolic extracts of leaves and rhizomes and the ethyl acetate extract of stems had higher activity than the other extracts of different parts.

**Table 12 :** Extraction solvent effect on the antioxidant capacity of different parts of *Costus afer*.

Plants parts	Solvent	FRAP (mg/g cat. eqv.)	DPPH (IC <sub>50</sub> )
Leaf	HEX	138.56 ± 0.8 <sup>bα</sup>	7.69 ± 0.07 <sup>bα</sup>
	Ethyl acetate	123.03 ± 0.26 <sup>cδ</sup>	13.28 ± 0.43 <sup>bβ</sup>
	MeOH	251.84 ± 2.19 <sup>aα</sup>	0.19 ± 0.03 <sup>cα</sup>



	H <sub>2</sub> O	57.76 ± 0.14 <sup>dα</sup>	59.07 ± 2.72 <sup>aδ</sup>
Stem	HEX	114.88 ± 0.7 <sup>bβ</sup>	7.7 ± 0.08 <sup>cα</sup>
	Ethyl acetate	156.89 ± 0.68 <sup>aα</sup>	0.41 ± 0.06 <sup>dα</sup>
	MeOH	103.04 ± 1.75 <sup>bβ</sup>	38.94 ± 0.49 <sup>aδ</sup>
	H <sub>2</sub> O	46.93 ± 0.76 <sup>cβ</sup>	17.23 ± 0.16 <sup>bα</sup>
Rhizomes	HEX	105.3 ± 0.73 <sup>cβ</sup>	5.10 ± 0.03 <sup>cβ</sup>
	Ethyl acetate	139.43 ± 0.37 <sup>aβ</sup>	11.96 ± 0.0 <sup>bβ</sup>
	MeOH	117.51 ± 0.52 <sup>bβ</sup>	4.92 ± 0.2 <sup>cβ</sup>
	H <sub>2</sub> O	55.04 ± 0.35 <sup>dα</sup>	40.68 ± 2.2 <sup>aβ</sup>

<sup>a,b,c,d</sup> Solvents effect on antioxidant capacity of plant parts. Means with different letters (a, b, c, and d) within a column of the same plant part are significantly different from each other at  $p < 0.05$ .  $\alpha\beta\delta$  compares the antioxidant capacity of plant parts extracted with the same solvent. Means designated with different symbols are significantly different from one another at  $p < 0.05$ .

In addition, the inhibition of lipid peroxidation by the aqueous extract ( $80.60 \pm 0.28\%$ ) was significantly higher ( $p < 0.05$ ) than the methanolic extract ( $77.00 \pm 0.84\%$ ). Nevertheless, both methanol and aqueous extracts of *C. afer* possess antioxidant properties as well as bioactive metabolites [17, 52].

**Table 13:** Fifty percent inhibitory concentrations of different fractions of *C. afer* leaf and stem in different antioxidant system *in vitro* [17]

Fractions of <i>C. afer</i>	IC <sub>50</sub>	
	TBARS (0.1-1.0 µg/ml)	LPO (10-100 µg/ml)
Butanol stem	0.68	57.94
Butanol leaf	0.49	47.21
Hexane stem	0.49	51.02
Hexane leaf	0.48	52.19
Ethyl acetate stem	0.40	60.39
Ethyl acetate leaf	0.41	48.40
Aqueous stem	0.37	41.15
Aqueous leaf	0.38	43.90
Gallic acid	0.36	44.40
Ascorbic acid	0.40	44.09

### Anti-spasmodic activity

Acetylcholine and histamine doses significantly ( $P < 0.05$ ) increased the amplitude of rhythmic contractions in the jejunum, whereas CALE caused a significant ( $P < 0.05$ ) of basal rhythmic contractions and acetylcholine- and histamine-induced contractions, with 114.3µg/ml CALE inhibiting 2.86µg/ml acetylcholine and histamine by 69.37 and 50.34% respectively. The effects of CALE compare favorably with those of atropine and promethazine and suggest that the extract may contain principles with antispasmodic properties and may be useful in the management of diseases

such as diarrhea, incontinence, peptic ulcer, gastrointestinal cramps, gastritis and muscle spasms [52, 53].

#### ***Hypoglycaemic activity and Inhibitory activity of carbohydrate hydrolysing enzymes***

*Costus afer* showed a significant hypoglycemic effect ( $p < 0.05$ ) comparable to that of the standard hypoglycemic drug glibenclamide. However, the plant extract did not reduce blood glucose levels in glucose-fed rats. Similarly, a combination of the plant extract and glibenclamide caused a significant reduction in fasting blood glucose in both glucose and non-glucose fed rats. The results validate the use of *Costus afer* as a hypoglycemic plant in indigenous medicine [54].

Hexane, ethyl acetate, methanol and water extracts prepared from the leaf, stem and rhizome of *C. afer* inhibited  $\alpha$ -amylase and  $\alpha$ -glucosidase activities. Rhizome extract in ethyl acetate and leaf extract in methanol showed the best inhibitory activity against  $\alpha$ -amylase and  $\alpha$ -glucosidase ( $IC_{50}$ : 0.10 and 5.99 mg/mL), respectively. Kinetic analysis revealed two modes of enzyme inhibition (competitive and mixed) [51].

#### ***Antimicrobial Activity***

The ethanolic extract inhibited all test organisms *S. aureus*, *E. coli*, *P. mirabilis*, *K. pneumonia* and *P. aeruginosa*. The results had revealed that *Costus afer* inhibited the growth of test organisms *Aspergillus niger*, *Fusarium oxysporium* and *Botryodiplodia theobromae* except *Rhizopus stolonifer*. The *in vivo* results had shown that *C. afer* extract was effective in reducing tuber rot, suggesting that the use of *C. afer* would be useful in the treatment of mycotic infections and in the control of fungal diseases of plants, justifying the use of this plant in the treatment of human and plant diseases [55, 56].

#### ***Nephroprotective effect on lead induced kidney damage***

*Costus afer* treatment had significantly ( $P < 0.05$ ) reversed the decrease in Glutathione Peroxidase (GSH-PX), Superoxide Dismutase (SOD), Catalase (CAT), Glutathione-S-transferase (GST) activity levels observed in the lead acetate alone group. Similarly, the increase in malondialdehyde (MDA) level in the lead acetate alone group was significantly ( $P < 0.05$ ) reduced in the *Costus afer* treated groups. There were significant ( $P < 0.05$ ) decreases in serum sodium ( $146 \pm 2.1$  to  $133 \pm 6.0$ ) and potassium ( $5.1 \pm 0.4$  to  $4.4 \pm 0.3$ ) in the lead acetate-alone group and the treatment group, respectively. There was also a significant decrease ( $P < 0.05$ ) in serum total protein and albumin levels ( $67 \pm 7.9$  to  $47 \pm 5.0$  g/dl) and ( $45 \pm 4.4$  to  $33 \pm 5.5$  g/dl) in the lead acetate alone and *Costus afer* treated groups, respectively. Conclusions: Aqueous extract of *Costus afer* leaves may be nephroprotective in albino rats.

### ***Cardiac activity and blood pressure coupled with respiration***

The pharmacological effect of the total aqueous extract of *C. afer* on cardiac activity and blood pressure coupled with respiration had revealed that *C. afer* at doses between  $2.94 \cdot 10^{-3}$  and  $4.71 \cdot 10^{-2}$  g/kg body weight (BW) induces a decrease in the amplitude of P and QRS waves as well as heart rate in rabbits. This extract at doses between  $2.94 \cdot 10^{-3}$  and  $3.82 \cdot 10^{-2}$  g/kg body weight (BW) induces hypotension and decreased amplitude of respiratory activity in rabbits. In the presence of atropine ( $10^{-6}$  mg/ml), the negative inotropic effect of *C. afer* is abolished. The persistence of the negative chronotropic effect in the presence of this muscarinic cholinergic receptor antagonist also suggests the presence of non-cholinergic cardioinhibitory substances. For concentrations between  $10^{-12}$  and  $10^{-6}$  mg/ml, *Costus afer* induces positive inotropic effects on the isolated rat heart which would be due to the presence of cardiotonic substances. *Costus afer*, at concentrations above  $10^{-6}$  mg/ml, induces negative inotropic and chronotropic effects on the contractile activity of the isolated rat heart. The results of this study would thus suggest that this crude extract would contain cholinomimetic and non-cholinomimetic active principles and adrenomimetic active principles. [57].

### **4. CONCLUSION**

The bibliographic study revealed that *Costus afer* Ker-Gawl. (Costaceae) is a pharmacologically and chemically studied plant species. The diversity of phytochemicals present in the plant species, especially flavonoids, alkaloids, phenols and essential oils, provides scientific evidence for its use as antihyperglycemic, hepatoprotective, cardioprotective, nephroprotective, analgesic, anti-inflammatory and antioxidant, and other pharmacological activities. This is an evidence of the abundance of phytochemicals, which sufficiently prove the reasons why local people use this plant. Thus *Costus afer* Ker-Gawl is a good candidate for the tropical plant screening research program for the development of lead compounds against inflammatory, cardiac and antimicrobial diseases.

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