



HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT BENEFITS OF *Jatropha curcas* Linn.

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ABSTRACT

An attempt has been made to review the health and environmental benefits of physics nut (*Jatropha curcas* Linn.). it is established different parts of this biodiesel producing plant including the leaves, the oil, sap, stem, roots and bark have numerous health benefits including skin injections, antidote for snake bites, leprosy and rheumatism, treatment of tooth ache and muscular pains, pile, fever, jaundice, gonorrhoea, constipation, heart burn and as purgative as well as contraceptive principle. It is also maintained that *J. curcas* has anti-malarial, insecticidal, anti-cancerous and anti-tumor properties. Environmentally, *J. curcas* has great potential for soil enrichment, can replace synthetic fertilizers as the leaves and branches are used as manure for coconut trees. It contributes to carbon sequestration thereby aiding in the mitigation of climate change. It also has the potential of retaining marginal and degraded soil by re anchoring the soil with substantial root and reducing possibility of soil erosion. The study also established that *J. curcas* has the potential of remediating heavy metal and hydrocarbon contaminated soils. The health and environmental benefits of this multipurpose plant need to harness to better the lots of Nigeria rural populace.

Keywords: *Jatropha curcas*, health values, environmental benefits, rural development

INTRODUCTION

Jatropha curcas L. (physic nut) is a species of flowering plant in the spurge family Euphorbiaceae. It is a native to the American tropics mostly likely Mexico and Central America (Balick and Paul, 2000); It

is called Lapalapa by the Yorubas, Cinidazugu by the Hausas, olulu-idu/uru by the Igbos, omangba by the Iyedes in Benue State and Itiakpa by the Urhobos in Delta State and biodiesel fuel plant commonly. It