

## Floristic Composition and Life Forms for Wild Plants of Shada Highest Mountain and Wadi Sagamah at Al Baha Area, Saudi Arabia

M.A. Al Zubaide, H.S Al Zahrani and A.A. Al Toukhy

Department of Biological Sciences, Faculty of Science,  
King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

**Abstract:** Study area lies in southern region of Saudi Arabia between the latitudes of 41° 30' North and longitudes of 19° 84' East. Ten stands in different highest above sea level were chosen to study floristic composition and life form for wild plants with recognizing plant communities, life forms spectra, abundance and economic uses. Total number of recorded species in study area were 29 belongs to 27 genus and 20 families. Twenty one species representing perennial and eight species were annual with ratios 72.41% and 27.60 % respectively. Fabaceae (leguminosae) have the highest contributions, 13.8% followed by Poaceae (graminae) and Asteraceae with ratio(10.3%) Acanthaceae and Amaranthaceae with ratio (6.9%) *Apocynaceae*, *Aristolochiaceae*, *Asclepiadaceae*, *Boraginaceae*, *Cucurbitaceae*, *Cleomaceae*, *Convolvulaceae*, *Capparidaceae*, *Cruciferae*, *Cucurbitaceae*, *Malvaceae*, *Rhamnaceae*, *Solanaceae* and *Tiliaceae* with (3.4%) for each. The tree represented by (17.2%), shrubs (51.8%) and weeds (31.1%) respectively. The economic use showed that medical (44.83%), grazing and edible (13.79), fuel (3.44), other (24.13%).

**Key words:** Floristic composition • Life forms • Wild plants

### INTRODUCTION

Saudi Arabia, a part of the Arabian Peninsula, covers more than 2 million sq kms and comprises several distinct physiographical regions, such as mountains, Valleys (Wadis), sandy and rocky deserts, salt pans (Sabkhahs) and lava areas (Harrats), *etc.* [1]. Saudi Arabia's biodiversity is under threat from multiple stresses. Climate change is one of the several pressures. Although climate changes will have consequences all over Saudi Arabia, not all regions will be affected equally, nor all regions equally vulnerable to those impacts. Canonical correlation in Saudi Arabia, being located in the arid part of the world is expected to experience faster warming due to climate change than countries located in the tropical or temperate regions. However, significant variation can be anticipated due to the large size of the country, its diverse landscapes and also due to its Red Sea coast on the western side and the Arabian Gulf on the eastern side. The flora of Saudi Arabia has about 2281 species in 853 genera [2].

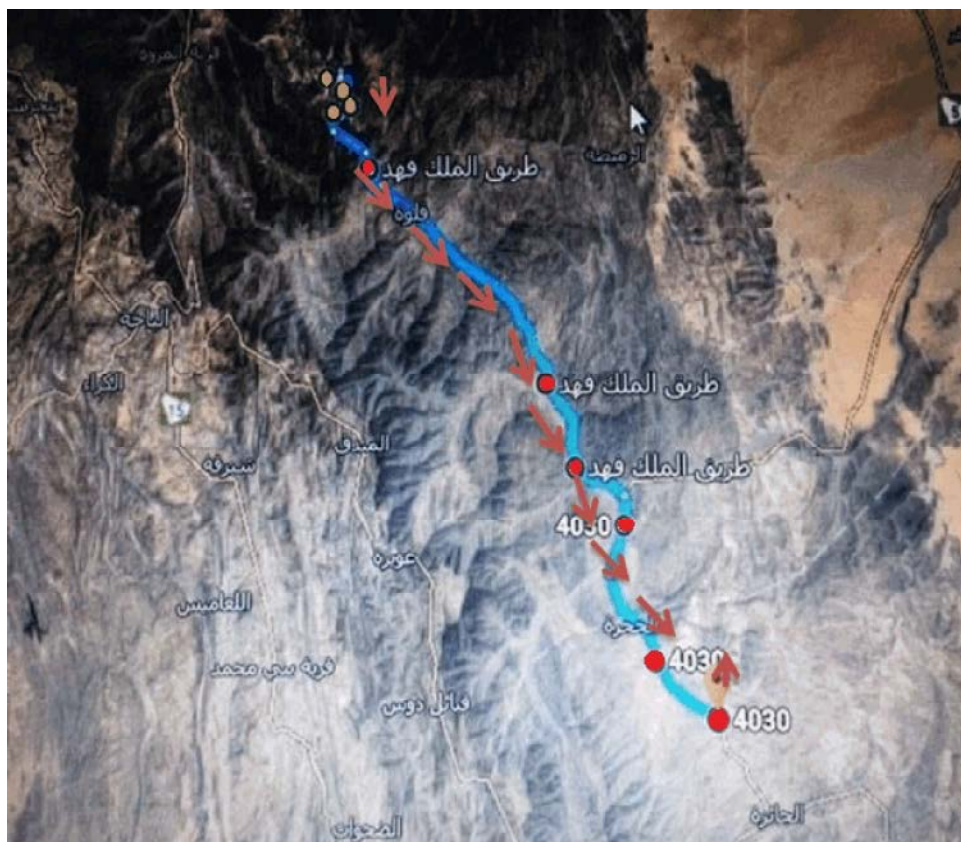
In Al-Baha province, Southern of KSA, Shada Highest mountain and Wadi Sagamah. areas have a large importance diversity of the group of wild plants., 495 plant

species falling in 314 genera and 76 families occurred in the Shada Mountains, including 19 endemic species and 43 endangered species and accounting for 22% of the total flora in Saudi Arabia [3].

The aim of the present study is to investigate floristic composition life form spectra, abundance and economic uses in Shada Mountain and Wadi Sagamah in Al- Baha province at KSA.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

Ten stands (four in Shada Mountain & 6 at Wadi Sagamah ) were selected to represent the environmental variations (Fig 1). The stand size 20 × 20 m. In each stand, list of species, common species were recorded to Braun-Blanquet scale [4], the abundance and life form were calculated according to Braun-Blanquet cover abundance scale as follows: Scale 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, + and r cover abundance, 75%, 50-70%, 25-50%, 5-25%, 1-5%, few and solitary respectively, where life forms of the species were identified following the Raunkiar scheme as follows [5], Code Ph, Ch, G, Th and P means life form Phanerophytes, Chamaephytes, Geophytes-Helophytes, Therophytes,



- Stands from 1 to 4
- Stands from 5 to 10

Fig. 1: Distribution of 10 stands along study area by using their coordinates (GPS).

Therophytes and Parasites respectively. The potential and actual economic uses of wild plants were assessed on three bases; field observations, information collected from local inhabitants and literature review [6-21]. The economic uses were classified into 5 major categories: grazing, fuel, medicinal uses, human food and other uses (e.g. ornamental uses, sand binder, soap manufacture and oil and dye extraction...etc.). As almost all the plants are ecologically important (e.g. keeping stability and biodiversity of the ecosystems, sharing in soil stabilization and symbiosis, etc.), this criterion was not taken into consideration in the evaluation of the economic importance of the plant.

## RESULTS

### Floristic Composition

The recorded species in the study area, their families, life forms, habits, abundance and their uses are listed in Tables 1, 2 & 3 and 4. Table (1) cleared that total number

of recorded species in the study area was 29 species belong to 27 Genus and 20 families. Table(2) & Fig. (2) showed that more than 72.41% of the recoded species are perennials (21 species) and 27.60 % are annuals (8 species). Fabaceae (leguminosae) have the highest contributions, 13.8% followed by Poaceae (graminae) and Asteraceae with ratio (10.3%) Acanthaceae and Amaranthaceae with ratio (6.9%) Apocynaceae, Aristolochiaceae, Asclepiadaceae, Boraginaceae, Cucurbitaceae, Cleomaceae, Convolvulac ae, Cappariceae, Crucifceae, Cucurbitaceae, Malvaceae, Rhamnaceae, Solanaceae and Tiliaceae

With (3.4%) for each. The tree represented by(17.2%), shrubs(51.8%) and weeds(31.1%) respectively. One species was recorded 100% (Acacia haulms), two species were recorded 90 % (Aerva javanica & Solanum incanum),80%(Senna Alexandria & Citrullus colocyanthis ) 70% (Cassia etalica & Zizphus spina chiristi). The rest of species (22 species) were recorded in less than 60 % of the total stand.

Table 1: Species and families recorded in study areas (Shada mountain and Wadi Sagamah)

Species	Families
1 Justicia flava	Acanthaceae
2 Justicia minuta	
3 Aerva javanica	Amaranthaceae
4 Celosia trigyna	
5 Aderium obessum	Apocynaceae
6 Aristo lochia bracteolate	Aristolochiaceae
7 Pergalaria tomentosa	Asclepiadaceae
8 Pulicaria Arabic	Asteraceae
9 Tagetes minuta	
10 Conzya incana	
11 Heliotropium europaeum	Boraginaceae
12 Citrullus colocynthis	Cacurbitaceae
13 Capparis spionosa	Cappariceae
14 Cleome droserifolia	Cleomeaceae
15 Ipomea sinensis	Convolvulaceae
16 Morettia canscons	Crucifceae
17 Corallocarpus schimperi	Cucurbitaceae
18 Ricinus communis	Eupharbiaceae
19 Acacia hamulosa	
20 Astagalus spinonsus	
21 Senna alexandrina	Fabaceae (leguminosae)
22 Cassia etalica	
23 Abutilom figarianum	Malvaceae
24 Setaria pumila	
25 Cenchrus ciliaris	Poaceae (graminae)
26 Aristida adsconsionis	
27 Ziziphus spina-christi	Rhamnaceae
28 Solanum incanum	Solanaceae
29 Grewia tenax	Tiliaceae

Table 2: Life form for species recorded in study areas ( Shada mountain and Wadi Sega amah )

Species	LF.	P %
1 Justicia flava	Per Shrub	%16
2 Justicia minuta	Per Shrub	%18
3 Aerva javanica	Per Shrub	%33
4 Celosia trigyna	Ann Shrub	%17
5 Aderium obessum	Per Tree	%25
6 Aristo lochia bracteolate	Ann Shrub	%34
7 Pergalaria tomentosa	Per Shrub	%8
8 Pulicaria Arabic	Ann Weed	%11
9 Tagetes minuta	Ann Shrub	%19
10 Conzya incana	Per Weed	%21
11 Heliotropium europaeum	Ann Weed	%28
12 Citrullus colocynthis	Per Weed	%13
13 Capparis spionosa	Per Shrub	% 8
14 Cleome droserifolia	Per Shrub	%11
15 Ipomea sinensis	Ann Weed	%16
16 Morettia canscons	Ann Shrub	%33
17 Corallocarpus schimperi	Per Weed	%25
18 Ricinus communis	Per Shrub	%19
19 Acacia hamulosa	Per Tree	%14
20 Astagalus spinonsus	Per Shrub	%18
21 Senna alexandrina	Per Tree	%23
22 Cassia etalica	Per Tree	%13
23 Abutilom figarianum	Per Shrub	% 8
24 Setaria pumila	Per Weed	%11
25 Cenchrus ciliaris	Per Weed	%36
26 Aristida adsconsionis	Per Weed	%25
27 Ziziphus spina-christi	Per Tree	%13
28 Solanum incanum	Ann Shrub	%21
29 Grewia tenax	Per Shrub	%16



Fig. 2: Percentage of habits of the recorded species in study area( Shada mountain an Wadi Sagamah )

Table 3: The economic uses of the recorded species in Shada mountain and Wadi Sagamah.

Species	Uses				
	M	G	E	F	O
1 Justicia flava					
2 Justicia minuta					
3 Aerva javanica					
4 Celosia trigyna					
5 Aderium obessum					□
6 Aristo lochia bracteolate	□				
7 Pergalaria tomentosa	□				
8 Pulicaria Arabic	□				
9 Tagetes minuta	□		□		
10 Conzya incana					□
11 Heliotropium europaeum					□
12 Citrullus colocynthis			□		
13 Capparis spionosa	□		□		
14 Cleome droserifolia	□				
15 Ipomea sinensis					□
16 Morettia canscons		□			
17 Corallocarpus schimperi					□
18 Ricinus communis	□				
19 Acacia hamulosa	□				
20 Astagalus spinonsus	□				
21 Senna alexandrina	□				
22 Cassia etalica	□				
23 Abutilom figarianum	□				
24 Setaria pumila		□	□		
25 Cenchrus ciliaris		□			
26 Aristida adsconsionis					□
27 Ziziphus spina-christi	□	□		□	□
28 Solanum incanum	□				
29 Grewia tenax	□				

**Economic Uses:** Result in Table (3) and Fig. (3) showed that medical plants represented by families *Aristolochiaceae*, *Asclepadeaceae*, *Astreaceae*, *Cappariceae*, *Cleomeace* *Fabceae*, *Malvaceae* *Rhamnaceae* and *Salaneaceae*, the economic uses showed that medical (44.83%), grazing and edible(13.79), fuel (3.44), other (24.13%).

**Life Form Spectra:** The life form spectra of the vegetation in Shada mountain and Wadi Sagamah indicated that, perennials had the highest contribution in the study area (72.41% of the total recorded species), divided by

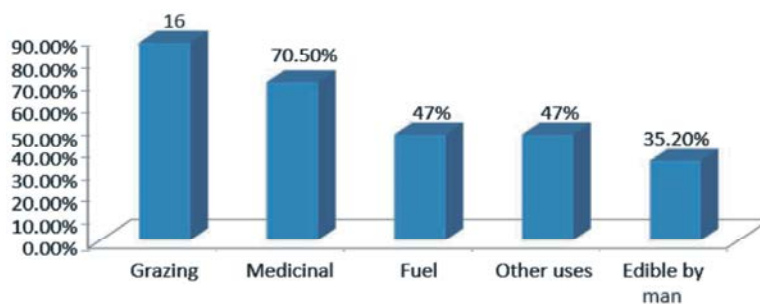


Fig. 3: Descending arrangement of the economic uses of the recorded species in Shada mountain and Wadi Sagamah.

Table 4: Determination the abundance of species according to Braun-Blanquet cover-abundance scale.

Family	Species	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Presence
Acanthaceae	<i>Justicia flava</i>	1	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	4
	<i>Justicia minuta</i>	0	1	1	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	4
Amaranthaceae	<i>Aerva javanica</i>	2	3	2	0	1	2	1	2	1	1	9
	<i>Celosia trigyna</i>	0	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	3
Apocynaceae	<i>Aderium obessum</i>	3	1	2	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	6
Aristolochiaceae	<i>Aristo lochia bracteolate</i>	2	0	2	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	5
Asclepiadaceae	<i>Pergalaria tomentosa</i>	1	1	3	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	6
	<i>Pulicaria Arabic</i>	0	2	2	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	5
Asteraceae	<i>Tagetes minuta</i>	1	0	1	3	1	0	0	1	0	0	5
	<i>Conzya incana</i>	1	3	0	2	0	0	1	1	0	1	6
Boraginaceae	<i>Heliotropium europaeum</i>	0	0	3	1	2	2	1	0	0	1	6
Cacurbitaceae	<i>Citrullus colocynthis</i>	1	1	2	1	1	1	3	0	1	0	8
Cappariceae	<i>Capparis spionosa</i>	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	3
Cleomaceae	<i>Cleome droserifolia</i>	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
Convolvulaceae	<i>Ipomea sinensis</i>	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
Crucifceae	<i>Morettia canscons</i>	1	4	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	5
Cucurbitaceae	<i>Corallocarpus schimperi</i>	1	1	2	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	6
	<i>Ricinus communis</i>	2	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	6
Eupharbiaceae	<i>Acacia hamulosa</i>	4	4	2	3	3	1	1	3	2	1	10
	<i>Astagalus spinonsus</i>	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	2	4
	<i>Senna alexandrina</i>	0	0	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	1	8
Malvaceae	<i>Cassia etalica</i>	0	1	0	1	2	2	2	3	0	2	7
	<i>Abutilom figarianum</i>	0	3	2	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	5
	<i>Setaria pumila</i>	2	1	2	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	6
Poaceae,graminae	<i>Cenchrus ciliaris</i>	0	2	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	5
	<i>Aristida adscensionis</i>	0	0	0	1	2	2	1	3	0	1	6
Rhamnaceae	<i>Ziziphus spina-christi</i>	0	1	0	0	2	1	2	2	1	2	7
Solanaceae	<i>Solanum incanum</i>	2	4	2	3	2	1	1	0	1	1	9
Tiliaceae	<i>Grewia tenax</i>	2	1	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	4

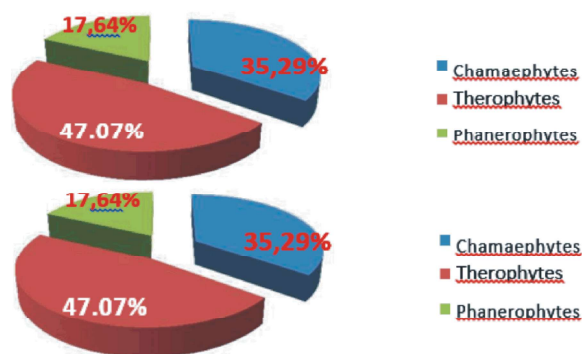


Fig. 4: Life form spectra of the recorded species in study areas (Shada mountain and Wadi Sagamah).

chamaephytes (35.29%) followed by phanerophytes (17.64%) and therophytes (47.07%) of the total recorded species) (Fig. 4).

**Abundance:** Data in Table (4) showed that was found at all stands (10 stands) which repress location the percentage 5 – 75 %. *Acacia hamusa* found in all locations (stands) as common species where it was found in one stand, abundance ranged between less than 1 % and 50 % and solitary in stands). Also, the *Aerva javanica* & *Solanum incum* were found as common species where it was found in 9 stands. The number of individuals of this species represent 25–75 % present in

the stands 1& 2 and between 1–5 % in stands 6,7, followed by *Senn alexandria* & *Citrullus colocynthis* presence found in 8 stands, the abundance was from 5–50 % and *Cassia etalica* & *Ziziphus spina- christic* (presence in 7 stands) and the abundance was from 5–50 % in stands 2,6,7, 8 and 10, from 1–5 % in stands 4,5 & 7 *Heliotropium europaeum* (presence in 6 stands) and *Morettia canscons* (presence in 5 stands) showed abundance between 5–50 % which was found in stands from 1-8 stands. *Zygophyllum simplex* was found in stands 2 & 5-10, the abundance was 25–50 %. Abundance in *Justicia flava* *Justicia minuta* (presence in 4 stands) and *Celosia trigyna* (presence in 3 stands) ranged between 1–25 %. Also we found that abundance of *Aerva javanica* (presence in 9 stands).

## DISCUSSION

The recorded species in the present study (29 species) represent about 1.34% of the whole flora of Saudi Arabia and their families (20) represent about 2.34 %. From the biodiversity viewpoint. The present study can conclude that this area seems to be the highest area of the Kingdom. One of the main characteristics of the vegetation cover of Saudi Arabia is its low floristic diversity. The number of plant species that recorded in the country is 2172 species, many of which are in the wetter areas of its south–western part. Which include Sarrawat Mountains these species belong to 840 genera and 149 families [22]. The number of species increased to 2250 by adding subspecies, extinct and species that have not been identified yet [23]. Numbers of families, genera and species are very low compared to Saudi Arabia's vast land area, which is probably, the result of the harsh environmental conditions that prevail in the Sahara-Arabian region which covers vast area of the country. The greatest plant diversity, approximately 74% of the total plant species of Saudi Arabia, is found in the mountainous western area which includes the study area due mainly to a greater rainfall [24].

It is evident that the composites (family Asteraceae) have the highest contribution, followed by graminoides (family Poaceae). These results similar to the whole flora of Saudi Arabia where the highest families in the Whole flora are Poaceae (262 species =12.1%), Asteraceae (233 species = 10.7%) and Fabaceae (210 species = 9.7%) which represented by 705 species or 32.5% of the total plant species in the Kingdom [25]. Also, similar trend to the flora of other similar studied region in the Kingdom such as [1] whom found that the major plant families

present in the area in question were Poaceae (42 species) followed by papilionaceae (20 species), Euphorbiaceae and Asteraceae (18 and 15 species, respectively), while 18 families were represented by only one species.

Many investigators [22, 24-29]. were studied the vegetation–environment relations, vegetation ecosystem and flora of some regions in K.S.A, they found that the most plant species of Saudi Arabia belong to a limited number of plant families, for example, 1586 species belong to 23 families or 15.4% of the total families and these plant species represent 73% of the total species in the Kingdom. Also 46 families or 30% of the families in the country such as Aloaceae, Celastraceae, Commelinaceae and Burseraceae are found only in Sarrawat Mountains.

The life form spectrum indicated that therophytes were the most represented followed by chamaephytes and phanerophytes. These results agree with the studies in the same region [25]. which indicated that therophytes had the highest contribution. This may be due to the sampling in the present study was during season in which many annuals are dead. Moreover, he indicated that the loss of chamaephytes was due to overgrazing in that area. On the other hand, the results of the present study disagree with that of Heneidy and Bidak [30]. On Bisha, Asir region in southwestern of Saudi Arabia and E l-Demerdash *et al.* [31]. in the southern region. They concluded that the dominance of chamaephytes and therophytes over other life forms in that region would seem to be the hot dry climate, topography variations and biotic influence. Also, Chamaephyte life form is able to withstand water logging, high salinity levels and a wide range of temperature variability [32].

The present study indicated that wild plants grow at low and high altitudes, they grow at altitude from 150 to 2800 m above sea level. This may due to animal browsing, human interference, poor seed–setting, change in land use patterns and prevalence of unfavorable climatic conditions [34]. It is necessary to consider all possible causes of vegetation change at high altitudes. This is of particular significance in the case of endemic plants confined to high summits. At the species level, the changes observed must have not only affected the trees but also modified the distribution of associated taxa that are less easily detectable in aerial images [35].

*Wild plants in the study area* has 5 economic uses: grazing, medicinal, fuel, other use and edible by man. Four species (13.79% of total recorded species) are grazing & edible 15 species (51.72% of total recorded species) are medicinal, these results agreement with resource of the

Ministry of Agriculture [36]. whom stated that overgrazing is a major impediment to the regeneration of wild plants.

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