



**Chemical composition and larvicidal activity of essential oil of *Lippia kituiensis* against larvae of *Rhipicephalus appendiculatus***

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**ABSTRACT**

This study evaluated the larvicidal activity of essential oil of *Lippia kituiensis* leaves against larvae of *Rhipicephalus appendiculatus*. The oil was obtained by hydro-distillation of fresh leaves and analysed using Gas Chromatography-Mass Spectrometry (GC-MS). Analysis showed that sesquiterpenes were dominant (56.57%), followed by monoterpenes (36.36%), diterpenes (2.59%) and others (5.19%). Major sesquiterpenes were germacrene D,  $\beta$ -bourbonene, gamma cadinene and 2-isopropyl-5-methyl-9-methylene-bicyclo(4.4.0)dec-1-ene. Major monoterpenes were (1S, 4S)-(-)-camphor, *trans*-sabinene hydrate, gamma-terpinene, dl-limonene, alpha-terpinolene, 1-Phellandrene, beta-Myrcene, sabinene, camphene, alpha-pinene, 4-terpineol, 4-methyl-1-(1-methylethyl)-3-cyclohexen-1-ol, 14.29 borneol (=endo-borneol), camphore, and neo-allo-cimene. At 6, 12, 24, and 48 hrs after larval treatment, the oil showed activity against *R. appendiculatus* larvae with LC<sub>50</sub> in mg/ml of 3.26(3.14-3.38), 3.21(3.08-3.32), 3.15(3.03-3.26), 3.09(2.97-3.20) while LC<sub>90</sub> in mg/ml were 4.15 (3.95-4.45), 4.03 (3.85-4.30), 3.94 (3.77-4.19), 3.86 (3.69-4.09) respectively. Results of one way ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) showed there was no significant difference in activity of the oil against the larvae, between 6, 12, 24 and 48 hrs in all the concentrations used P = 0.97, 95% confidence. The findings indicated that essential oil of *L. kituiensis* possessed larvicidal properties and can be used to control tick larvae.

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**Keywords:** *Rhipicephalus appendiculatus*; essential oils; acaricidal activity, ticks.

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**INTRODUCTION**

*R. appendiculatus* is a three-host ixodid tick and is a vector of major economic importance in Africa. It transmits *Theileria parva* which causes East coast fever, a threatening disease in the livestock industry in Eastern, South-eastern and Central Africa (Olwoch et al., 2008). The use of synthetic chemical acaricides to control ticks in cattle is

expensive and ineffective, besides, causing environmental pollution (Annanet al., 2009).

Plant products have been used for curative purposes since ancient times (Pattanayak et al., 2010), and present-day research is geared towards finding effective natural products to replace synthetic chemicals. There are huge prospects in the use of extracts and essential oils of plants from tropical and subtropical regions of Africa,

Asia and South America, to come up with acaricides that can decrease the cost of tick control (Habeeb, 2010).

Essential oils from plants constitute a rich source of bioactive chemicals which have broad insecticidal activity (Abad et al., 2012). This is because they possess various bioefficacies that include repellent, antifeedant and respiration inhibitors (Akhtar and Isman, 2004). Among the plant essential oils that exhibited acaricidal properties is oil of *Chenopodium ambrosioides* which has potential to increase the mortality of adults and eggs of two-spotted spider mite, *Tetranychus urticae* (Chiassonet et al., 2004). Likewise, essential oil from flowers of *Ageratum houstonianum* showed activity against *Rhipicephalus lunulatus* (Pamo et al., 2004) while essential oil of *Origanum onites* was acaricidal against *Rhipicephalus turanicus* (Coskun et al., 2008).

*Lippia* is a genus of flowering plants in the verbena family (*Verbenaceae*) that are aromatic due to their essential oils (Arthur et al., 2011). The leaves of certain *Lippia* species such as *Lippia graveolens*, can be used as a culinary herb (Tucker et al., 2009). Other therapeutic functions of genus *Lippia* include remedy for gastrointestinal and respiratory disorders, and are also reported to have antimalarial, spasmolytic, sedative, hypotensive, and anti-inflammatory effects (Pascualet et al., 2001; Jigam et al., 2009). Camphor isolated from *L. kituiensis* essential oil was found to have a strong repellent activity against maize weevil compared with NN-diethyltoluamide (DEET) (Mwangi, 1992).

Essential oil of *Lippia graveolens* and *Lippia javanica* are among oils of *Lippia* species whose acaricidal efficacy have been ascertained (Magano et al., 2011; Martinez-Velazquez et al., 2011). It was shown that *L. graveolens* can cause 90-100% mortality on 10 day *Rhipicephalus microplus* tick larvae (Martinez-Velazquez et al., 2011) while *L.*

*javanica* was found to be repellent against adults cattle ticks of *Hyalomma marginatum* (Magano et al., 2011). To the best of our knowledge, acaricidal efficacy of *L. kituiensis* essential oil has not been done. The aim of this study was thus to determine the chemical components present in the oil and its larvicidal properties against *R. appendiculatus*.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Sample collection

Leaves of *L. kituiensis* were collected from botanical-garden of Egerton University in Kenya which is at an altitude of 2127 m. A voucher specimen has been deposited at the Department of Biological Sciences, Egerton University.

### Extraction of essential oil

Fresh leaves of *L. kituiensis* were subjected to hydro-distillation in a modified clevenger-type apparatus for at least 4 hrs according to British pharmacopoeia (Papachristos and Stamopoulos, 2004). The essential oil obtained was dried over anhydrous sodium sulphate then stored in sealed glass vials at 4 °C awaiting chemical composition analysis using GC-MS and larvicidal bioassay done.

### GC-MS analysis of oil

Samples of essential oils were diluted in methyl-t-butyl ether (MTBE) (1:100) and analyzed on an Agilent GC-MSD apparatus equipped with an Rtx-5SIL MS ('Restek') (30 m x 0.25 mm, 0.25 µm film thickness) fused-silica capillary column. Helium (at 0.8 mL/min) was used as a carrier gas. Samples were injected in the split mode at a ratio of 1:10 – 1:100. The injector was kept at 250 °C and the transfer line at 280 °C. The column was maintained at 50 °C for 2 min and then programmed to 260 °C at 5 °C /min and held for 10 min at 260 °C. The MS was operated in the electron impact ionization (EI) mode at 70 eV, in m/z range 42-350. The identification of

compounds was performed by comparing their retention indices and mass spectra with those found in literature (Adams, 2007) and supplemented by Wiley 7N.1, HPCH 1607.L and FLAVORS.L GC-MS libraries. The relative proportions of the essential oil constituents are expressed as percentages obtained by peak area normalization, all relative response factors being taken as one.

#### Larval bioassay

The larvae used for the bioassay were reared according to Bailey (1960). The oil was first dissolved in 2% Dimethyl Sulfoxide (DMSO) and a stock solution of 4.5 mg/ml made. The stock solution was obtained after conducting preliminary screening. Serial dilution of 4.5 mg/ml resulted in 14 concentrations ranging from 1.5 mg/ml to 4.5 mg/ml. The bioassay was done using contact toxicity according to Pamo et al. (2005) with modification. This involved attaching Whatman No. 1 filter paper to the bottom of the Petri dish (15 cm) using double sided cellophane tape and 20 larvae placed inside. Different concentrations of the oil was then sprinkled on the Petri dish containing the larvae using a pasture pipette making sure that filter paper was wet and the larvae came in contact with the sprinkled extract. The Petri dish was kept at 25 °C and 75% relative humidity and experiment replicated three times. From the start of the experiment, mortality data was obtained at 6, 12, 24, and 48 hrs under a microscope x 4.5. The larvae were considered dead if they do not move their appendages when prodded with a pin. A negative control was set consisting of 2% DMSO while positive control consisted of 0.2% v/v of amitraz®.

#### Statistical analysis

The mortality data obtained was subjected to Probit regression analysis to calculate concentration dependent mortality

for the LC<sub>50</sub> and LC<sub>90</sub> values and the associated 95% confidence interval. The significant difference in activity between 6, 12, 24 and 48 hrs was analyzed using one way ANOVA.

#### RESULTS

Table 1 shows the results of the GC-MS analysis of *L. kituiensis* oil. Sesquiterpenes were dominant (56.57%) followed by monoterpenes (36.36%), diterpenes (2.59%) and others (5.19%). Major sesquiterpenes were germacrene D, β-bourbonene, gamma-cadinene and 2-isopropyl-5-methyl-9-methylene-bicyclo-(4.4.0)dec-1-ene while major monoterpenes include (1S,4S)-(-)- camphor, trans-sabinene hydrate, gamma-Terpinene, dl-limonene, alpha-terpinolene, 1-phellandrene, beta-myrcene, sabinene, camphene, alpha-pinene, (-)- 4-terpineol, 4-methyl-1-(1-methylethyl)-3-cyclohexen-1-ol, 14.29 borneol (=endo-borneol), camphore, and neo-allo-ocimene. Major sesquiterpenes and monoterpenes are those with % area above 1 and are highlighted in Table 1.

Mean percentage larval mortalities at 6, 12, 24, and 48 hrs after treatment together with LC values are shown in Table 2. LC<sub>50</sub> in mg/ml were: 3.26 (3.14-3.38), 3.21(3.08-3.32), 3.15(3.03-3.26), 3.09(2.97-3.20), while LC<sub>90</sub> were 4.15 (3.95-4.45), 4.03(3.85-4.30), 3.94 (3.77-4.19), 3.86(3.69-4.09) at 6, 12, 24, and 48 hrs respectively. The highest concentration of 4.5 mg/ml caused 100% mortality at the first 6 hrs while amitraz (0.2% v/v) ® recorded the same % mortality at 48 hrs. The negative control used was 2% of DMSO which showed no activity against the larvae within 0 to 48 hrs. The results of one way ANOVA showed there was no significant difference in activity between 6, 12, 24 and 48 hrs in all the concentrations of the oil used against the larvae P =0.97 at 95% confidence.

**Table 1:** *L. kituiensis* essential oil components.

Name of Compound	Retention Time	Percent Concentration	Method of Detection
<b>Monoterpenes</b>			
delta3 carene	6.44	0.08	GC-MS
2-methyl-5-(1-methylethyl)-Bicyclo(3.1.0)hex-2-ene	6.60	0.24	GC-MS
alpha-pinene, (-)-	<b>6.77</b>	<b>2.04</b>	GC-MS
Camphene	<b>7.23</b>	<b>7.26</b>	GC-MS
Sabinene	<b>7.91</b>	<b>2.15</b>	GC-MS
beta-myrcene	<b>8.36</b>	<b>1.49</b>	GC-MS
1-Phellandrene	<b>8.72</b>	<b>1.11</b>	GC-MS
alpha-terpinene	9.08	0.55	GC-MS
dl-limonene	<b>9.52</b>	<b>6.52</b>	GC-MS
cis-ocimene	9.69	0.07	GC-MS
beta-trans-ocimene	10.01	0.24	GC-MS
gamma-terpinene	<b>10.31</b>	<b>1.22</b>	GC-MS
trans-sabinene hydrate	<b>10.71</b>	<b>4.45</b>	GC-MS
cis-sabinene hydrate	10.77	0.88	GC-MS
alpha.-terpinolene	<b>11.20</b>	<b>1.44</b>	GC-MS
linalool	12.11	0.20	GC-MS
neo-allo-ocimene	<b>12.45</b>	<b>2.39</b>	GC-MS
camphor, (1S,4S)-(-)-	<b>13.26</b>	<b>18.29</b>	GC-MS
Camphor	<b>13.35</b>	<b>3.49</b>	GC-MS
Pinocarvone	13.57	0.45	GC-MS
14.29 borneol (=endo-borneol)	<b>13.87</b>	<b>1.77</b>	GC-MS
4-methyl-1-(1-methylethyl)- 3-Cyclohexen-1-ol	<b>13.97</b>	<b>1.43</b>	GC-MS
4-terpineol	<b>14.10</b>	<b>3.03</b>	GC-MS
p-cymen-8-ol	14.18	0.39	GC-MS
l-verbenone	14.82	0.36	GC-MS
trans-(+)-carveol	15.01	0.17	GC-MS
dill ether	15.27	0.09	GC-MS
7-(1-methylethylidene)- Bicyclo[4.1.0]heptane	15.63	0.23	GC-MS
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>36.36%</b>	
<b>Sesquiterpenes</b>			
alpha-Cubebene	18.43	0.03	GC-MS
Ylangene	19.01	0.06	GC-MS
Copaene	19.16	0.48	GC-MS
beta-bourbonene	<b>19.43</b>	<b>1.36</b>	GC-MS
beta-Cubebene	19.50	0.26	GC-MS
Italicene	19.85	0.05	GC-MS
alpha-cedrene	20.08	0.06	GC-MS
Germacrene D	<b>20.35</b>	<b>3.20</b>	GC-MS
alpha-Guaiene	20.75	0.02	GC-MS
alpha-Elemene	21.01	0.06	GC-MS
gamma-Cadinene	<b>21.17</b>	<b>1.00</b>	GC-MS
allo-aromadendrene	21.35	0.88	GC-MS

gamma muurolene	21.70	0.54	GC-MS
ar-Curcumene	21.83	0.64	GC-MS
1H-Cyclopropa[a]naphthalene, decahydro-1,1,3a-trimethyl-7-methylene-, [1a.alpha.,3a.alpha.,7a.beta.,7b.alpha.)]-	21.98	0.04	GC-MS
2-isopropyl-5-methyl-9-methylene- Bicyclo[4.4.0]dec-1-ene	<b>22.26</b>	<b>1.05</b>	GC-MS
(E,Z)-alpha-farnesene	22.41	0.09	GC-MS
Zingiberene	22.51	0.10	GC-MS
Naphthalene, 1,2,3,4,4a,5,6,8a-octahydro-7-methyl-4-methylene-1-(1-methylethyl)-, (1.alpha.,4a.beta.,8a.alpha.)-	22.59	0.06	GC-MS
30.19 cubebol<10-epi->	22.66	0.42	GC-MS
delta-Cadinene	22.81	0.22	GC-MS
alpha-selinene	22.86	0.03	GC-MS
cadina-1,4-diene	23.00	0.04	GC-MS
Naphthalene, 1,2,4a,5,6,8a-hexahydro-4,7-dimethyl-1-(1-methylethyl)-,[1R-(1.alpha.,4a.alpha.,8a.alpha.)]-	23.14	0.07	GC-MS
Cadala-1(10),3,8-triene	23.28	0.03	GC-MS
2,4a,8,8-tetramethyl-1,1a,4,4a,5,6,7,8-octahydro-cyclopropa[d]naphthalene	23.47	0.09	GC-MS
1,5-epoxysalvial-4(14)-ene	23.85	0.07	GC-MS
beta-Gurjunene	23.98	0.12	GC-MS
1-Hydroxy-1,7-dimethyl-4-isopropyl-2,7-cyclodecadiene	24.07	0.09	GC-MS
1H-Cycloprop[e]azulen-7-ol, decahydro-1,1,7-trimethyl-4-methylene-, [1a.alpha.,4a.alpha.,7a.alpha.,7b.alpha.)]-	24.13	0.27	GC-MS
(-)-Caryophyllene oxide	24.25	0.11	GC-MS
28.15 germacrene d	24.74	0.16	GC-MS
Caryophyllene oxide	24.84	0.05	GC-MS
33.60 cubenol<1,10-di-epi->	24.98	0.27	GC-MS
Epizonarene	25.21	0.16	GC-MS
Valencene	25.55	0.34	GC-MS
1,2,3,4,4a,5,6,8a-octahydro-7-methyl-4-methylene-1-(1-methylethyl)-, (1.alpha.,4a.alpha.,8a.alpha.)-	25.67	0.14	GC-MS
Naphthalene (gamma-muurolene)			
t-Muurolol	25.85	0.24	GC-MS
Isoaromadendrene epoxide	27.05	0.02	GC-MS
cis-4,11,11-Trimethyl-8-methylenebicyclo(7.2.0)undeca-4-ene	27.22	0.02	GC-MS

40.52 Cadinene<14-hydroxy-delta->	29.00	0.08	GC-MS
1-Methylidene-2b-hydroxymethyl-3,3-dimethyl-4a-(3-methylbut-2-enyl)-cyclohexane	29.11	0.04	GC-MS
caryophylla-3,8(13)-dien-5.beta.-ol	29.86	0.02	GC-MS
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>56.57%</b>	
<b>Diterpenes</b>			
phytol isomer	34.91	0.04	GC-MS
n-Eicosane	44.29	0.01	GC-MS
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2.59%</b>	
<b>Others</b>			
beta-fenchyl alcohol	14.36	0.81	GC-MS
2-methoxy-3-(2-propenyl)- Phenol	18.69	0.16	GC-MS
Methyleugenol	19.93	0.12	GC-MS
(1s,2s,5R)-(+)-4-Isopropenyl-7-methyl-1-oxaspiro(2,5)octane	27.54	0.02	GC-MS
<b>Total number</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5.19%</b>	

**Table 2:** Larvicidal activity of essential oil of *L. kituiensis* against larvae of *R. appendiculatus* between 0-48 hrs.

Concentration in mg/ml	Mean (%) larval mortality±SD at the hrs shown below			
	6	12	24	48
1.50	0±0.00	0±0.00	0±0.00	0.00±0.00
2.00	1.67±2.87	1.67±2.87	1.67±2.87	1.67±2.87
2.20	3.33±2.87	3.33±2.87	3.33±2.87	3.33±2.87
2.50	11.67±2.87	11.67±2.87	11.67±2.87	13.33±2.87
2.80	20±5.00	20±5.00	23.33±5.77	28.33±2.87
3.00	35±5.00	38.33±5.77	41.67±5.00	46.7±2.87
3.30	43.33±7.64	50±5.00	51.67±7.64	56.6±7.640
3.45	51.67±7.64	56.67±7.64	61.67±2.87	65±5.00
3.65	60±2.87	66.67±2.87	70±5.00	75±5.00
3.70	73.3±2.87	75±5.00	78.33±5.00	83.33±2.87
3.85	81.7±5.77	85±5.00	88.33±5.77	91.7±7.64
4.00	90±5.00	96.67±2.87	100±0.00	100±0.00
4.20	98.33±2.87	100±0.00	100±0.00	100±0.00
4.50	100±0.00	100±0.00	100±0.00	100±0.00
LC <sub>50</sub>	3.26(3.14-3.38)	3.21(3.08-3.32)	3.15(3.03-3.26)	3.09(2.97-3.20)
LC <sub>90</sub>	4.15(3.95-4.45)	4.03(3.85-4.30)	3.94(3.77-4.19)	3.86(3.69-4.09)
Amitraz ® (0.2% v/v) <sup>P</sup>	0±0.00	56.67±11.55	90.00±10	100±0.00
DMSO +distilled H <sub>2</sub> O <sup>Q</sup>	0±0.00	0±0.00	0±0.00	0±0.00

<sup>P</sup> Positive control; <sup>Q</sup> Negative control

## DISCUSSION

GC-MS analysis of essential oil of *L. kituiensis* showed sesquiterpenes being dominant. The domination of sesquiterpenes in the present study compared with previous acaricidal studies on *Drimys brasiliensis* essential oil, which contained predominantly sesquiterpenes (66%), and it caused 100% mortality on the larvae of *Rhipicephalus microplus*, at concentrations of 2.5%, 1.25% and 0.625% (Ribeiro et al., 2008). GC-MS analysis of *L. kituiensis* oil in Tanzania showed variation with current study with camphor having 36.5% and 4-thujanol having 18.5% (Chogo and Crank, 1982). This could be because of essential oils of the same *Lippia* species growing in different geographical areas have been found to vary significantly in composition because of climatic conditions, large genetic diversity within the species and stable genetic traits of individual plants (Catalan and de Lampasona, 2002).

The oil showed larvicidal activity against *R. appendiculatus*. The activity of the oil against the larvae could be attributed to synergistic action of major components present in the oil whose acaricidal bioefficacy have been ascertained (Park et al., 2008). However, minor components present in the oil may also have contributed to the biological activity of the oil (Iacobellis et al., 2005).

Among the major compounds present in that oil acaricidal activity include alpha pinene, camphor, germacrene D, and 4-terpeniol. Oil of *Laurus novocanariensis* leaf has been identified to be dominated by alpha pinene (10.4%) and its acaricidal activity of 100% against *Psoroptes cuniculi* mites at concentrations of 10% and 5% after 24 hrs was attributed to the presence of this compound (Macchioniet al., 2006). Other studies have shown alpha pinene rich plant *Eucalyptus globulus* (9.93%), and dl-limonene rich plant *Eucalyptus staigeriana* have been reported to cause 100% mortality on gravid female ticks at concentrations of 15% and 12.5%, respectively in five different concentrations (Chagas et al., 2002). Camphor

(56.07%) has been identified as a chief essential oil component of *Ocimum kilim* and *scharicum*, responsible for wide range of therapeutic importance such as antimicrobial, antispasmodic, bactericide, carminative, hepato-protective, antiviral and larvicidal properties (Runyoro et al., 2010). Commercial camphor and terpinen-4-ol were found to be 7 to 48 times more active against both male and female *A. obtectus* adults' mite than the less active monoterpenes tested (Papachristos et al., 2004). Germacrene-D, has been reported to be an effective arthropod repellent (Bruce et al., 2005).

From the results of the bioassay, there was no significant difference in activity between 6, 12, 24 and 48 hrs with  $P = 0.97$  at 95% significant difference. This explained the fact that essential oil components are volatile compounds that are prone to rapid aerial oxidation and chemical re-arrangement thus lost activity quickly. Therefore, further increase in time could not increase larval mortality (Birkett et al., 2008). The oil of *L. kituiensis* caused 100% mortality at a concentration of 4.5mg/ml within the first 6 hrs while the positive control amitraz (0.2% v/v) reported the same % mortality at 48 hrs. The difference in activity between the oil extract and the positive control could be due to difference in concentration of the active ingredients present in both. This is because we could not isolate the active ingredient in the oil and quantify its concentration. Further studies should thus be done to isolate individual oil components, determine effects of each component on the tick larvae and quantify concentration of the active compound.

Due to various components present in the essential oils, the exact mode of action of these oils is not well proven. Because of their volatility, they could have been inhaled easily through the respiratory tract and lungs of the larvae which were then distributed in the bloodstream to various target sites (Adorjan and Buchbauer, 2010). Since essential oil are fat soluble, they might have permeated the

membranes of the skin before being captured by the micro-circulation and drained into the systemic circulation. Thus reaching all target organs too long (Mosset et al., 2003). Based on the poisoning symptoms observed on the larvae, there were convulsion and tremors followed by paralysis (knockdown) immediately the oil extract were exposed to larvae, followed by 100% mortality occurring within the first 30 mins at the highest concentration (4.5 mg/ml). The same behavior was observed in the positive control although convulsion and tremors persisted for a longer duration of more than 6 hrs before being knock down and 56.67 % of the larvae dying at 12 hrs.

The paralytic effect of the oil could be due to synergistic action of alpha pinene and camphor on the nervous system, since both have been reported to have anti-acetylcholinesterase activity (Piccollo et al., 2008). Paralytic effects of amitraz® were due to blockage of octopamine receptors, which leads to paralysis and death of the larvae (Chenaet et al., 2007).

### Conclusion

Results of this study indicate that essential oils obtained from *L. kituiensis* plant have acaricidal properties and could be used to control larvae of *R. appendiculatus* and related ticks.

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