



## Garden Egg (*Solanum aethiopicum*) as a Mystical plant in Akabo, South Eastern Nigeria: Health and Economic Implications

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**ABSTRACT:** Garden egg, popularly known as eggplant, is one of the strange and enigmatic vegetable plants that can energize and heal the body as well as the spirit. It is a manifestation of the wonders of God's creation and magnanimity. As recorded in the holy books, God made man and woman and told them to eat vegetables to keep their bodies and spirits healthy and together. Garden egg is one fruit that is highly acceptable and valued when offered to visitors. In Akabo, South eastern Nigeria, there is a practice called "Ofe", which translates to "garden eggplant mystics". It is a significant mystical practice that helps to maintain harmony among people and between bodies and spirits. In this study, the mystical, medicinal and economic implications of garden egg as applied in Akabo community are presented. Interview data and library databases were used to analyze the sources of information by theme. The origin, classes, and chemical composition of garden eggs as it affects its medicinal efficacy have been highlighted. Insights to the cultural significance of garden egg in Africa are also documented. The overall benefits of the various parts of the eggplant, viz: fruits, leaves, stems and roots and their economic importance to the global society have been presented. This study will serve as a useful piece to the global community to unravel the untapped potentials of garden egg.

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The garden egg (*Solanum aethiopicum*), an African eggplant is a fruity plant that is conceived to exhibit some mystical properties and is believed to have been divinely created to impart health and wellness to humanity. Globally, garden egg is known as eggplant with the general botanical name *Solanum melongena*. Eggplant exhibits a relatively short stature as opposed to arboreal growth patterns. The growth pattern of the plant resembles that of shrubs with varying heights ranging from 40 to 150 centimeters, which is equivalent to 1 foot 4 inches to 4 feet 11 inches. The plant's foliage stands out for its substantial size, rough lobes, and dimensions of 10 to 20 centimeters in length and 5 to 10 centimeters in width (Yang and Ojiewo,

2013; Sharma and Kaushik, 2021). Figure 1 shows typical eggplants and fruits. The eggplant commonly known as garden egg in major regions in Africa holds significant value worldwide due to its nutritional benefits for physical, mental, and emotional well-being. The botanical classification of Solanaceae, a family of angiosperms is characterized by their flowering properties and the gustatory experience of the fruits may vary depending on the particular species, with some exhibiting a bitter flavor profile. The morphology and pigmentation of the eggplant fruit are contingent on the specific species. The garden egg fruit is available in a variety of colors, including white, green, purple, yellow, red, and mixed. The

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typology of shapes encompasses circular, elliptical, and unwieldy configurations. *Solanum aethiopicum*, commonly known as the garden egg is an African eggplant which is characterized by its diminutive, hairless foliage and nearly spherical form. The plant species known as garden egg is referred to by various local names in Nigeria, including Dauta in Hausa, Igbagba in Yoruba, and Afufa in Igbo (Yang and Ojiewo, 2013; Portis *et al.*, 2018). From a botanical perspective, the fruit is classified as a berry and is composed of numerous small, flexible, edible seeds that exhibit a bitter taste. The aforementioned seeds are either covered in their outer layer or contain endogenous nicotinic alkaloids (Yang and Ojiewo, 2013; Saito *et al.*, 2003). The geographical provenance of the eggplant remains a subject of scholarly debate. Several commonly grown varieties produce oval-shaped, glossy, and purple-colored fruits. The fruit's endocarp stands out for having a porous texture and a

pallid tint that are reminiscent of animal flesh. Several other cultivars display a white coloration and possess a more elongated morphology. The cut surface of fruit flesh undergoes a rapid process of browning upon exposure to air (Saito *et al.*, 2003). Garden egg is a widely favored horticultural commodity grown in diverse geographical locations such as South and North India, America, and Africa. The autochthonous community regularly engages in the cultivation of a particular vegetable that is widely utilized as a dietary staple. The vegetable in question's glossy, blackish-purple exterior and elongated egg-like shape set it apart from other vegetables found in North America, Australia, and New Zealand. It is typically intended for consumption in a cooked state, as per the Encarta Dictionary of (2009). As per Gowda's (2016) findings, the flowers demonstrate a range of colors extending from white to purple and possess corollas comprising five lobes and yellow stamens.



**Fig 1:** Typical Eggplant fruits, Shrubs with leaves, stalk and flower

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In Akabo community, South eastern Nigeria, the eggplant exhibits some mystical values which result in its most sort for within the region. At some point, it is difficult to ascertain its mystical functionalities as it is widely used in the treatment of various ailments such as abdominal pain, constipation, diarrhea, and as an anti-ulcer agent. It also regulates blood pressure, enriches vitamins, boosts the immune system, reduces cholesterol, and prevents diabetes (Igwe *et al.*, 2003; Gürbüz *et al.*, 2018; Naeem and Ugur, 2019). The whole parts of the eggplant including the root, stalk, leaf, flower, and fruits have demonstrated some degree of efficacy in the treatment of some ailment. Furthermore, it is commonly used in performing certain rituals like marriage rites for young maidens, as food supplements, and for entertainment purposes. There is paucity of documented information on the mystical nature of the plant in relation to its outstanding functionalities. This study utilized both

interviews and library data sources to present the mystical bases, health and economic significance of garden egg as applied in Akabo community and the overall benefits of the various parts of the eggplant, viz: fruits, leaves, stems and roots to the global society. The untapped potentials of the eggplant based on the origin, classes and chemical composition as it affects its medicinal efficacy and insights to its cultural significance in Africa have been highlighted.

*Types and Classes of Eggplant:* The types and classes of eggplant majorly depends on location. They include Chinese eggplant, Indian eggplant, Bianca eggplant, Graffiti eggplant, Italian eggplant, American eggplant, Japanese eggplant, Ping tung eggplant, Santana eggplant, Little green eggplant, Tango eggplant, Thai eggplant and African eggplant (Garden egg). Figure 2 shows the various types of eggplant.



**Fig 2:** Types of eggplants based on regions

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*Chemical Composition of Garden Egg:* The chemical compositions of eggplants cut across nutrients, phytochemicals, minerals and vitamins. The eggplant exhibits a notable concentration of mineral ions including, potassium (K), magnesium (Mg), calcium (Ca), iron (Fe), zinc (Zn) and manganese (Mn) which make it useful as a medicinal plant. It also contains phytochemicals such as tannins, alkaloids, phenol, oxalate, as well as various vitamins (Ogunka-Nnoka and Ekrika, 2018; Ikpeazu *et al.*, 2019; Guillermo *et al.*, 2014; Sharma and Kaushik, 2021). Eggplant contains elevated concentrations of amino acids, which constitute a crucial constituent of cellular protein, and significant amounts of vitamins A and B (Naeem and Ugur, 2019). The garden-egg fruit is a rich source of vitamin C and minerals that contribute

to the overall health and well-being of the body. Tables 1 and 2 present the chemical composition of eggplants from various cultivars globally.

*The Mystical Nature of Garden –Egg Plant “Ofe” and its implication in Akabo and Igbo Land:* The garden eggplant possesses a range of mystical properties that are believed to promote holistic well-being, encompassing physical, spiritual, and emotional dimensions. Religion conveys to individuals in a spatially specific manner the benevolent actions of a divine entity for the betterment of humanity. As per the account presented in the holy books (Genesis 1:1–12), the entirety of God's creation was deemed to be of the utmost excellence. The invaluable endowments of nature, which are unparalleled and immeasurable,

establish a vital link between humanity and the natural world, thereby promoting holistic well-being. The Bible, a religious text rooted in Christianity, highlights the intellectual prowess of humanity as it posits that God fashioned humans from organic clay. The reference provided is to a biblical passage found in the book of Genesis, chapter 2, verse 7. It is not unexpected that humans are responsible for utilizing the resources of the natural world to seek solutions to issues concerning their physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being, as bestowed by nature's divine endowments. The flora indigenous to a given region provides ample sustenance for human survival. It is

imperative to acknowledge the inherent vulnerabilities that are intrinsic to the human condition as created by a divine entity. Hence, it can be argued that the divine entity has endowed humankind with the ability to discover the latent wisdom regarding the advantageous properties of certain flora present in their indigenous environment. A plant commonly referred to as garden egg is known to thrive in specific regions of Africa and beyond. The garden eggplant is highly favoured by the Igbo community residing in Akabo, an eastern region of Nigeria situated in West Africa.

**Table 1:** Chemical Composition of Dry Leaf Extract of Eggplant from African Cultivars, adapted from Ikpeazu *et al.* (2019)

S/N	Nutrients	% Composition	Ref.	
<b>Proximate Composition (%)</b>				
1	Crude Protein (g/100g)	6.92±1.04	Ikpeazu <i>et al.</i> , 2019	
2	Total Carbohydrate	4.26±0.80		
3	Crude fat	0.79±0.14		
4	Crude Fibre	1.82±0.37		
5	Ash	1.79±0.16		
8	Moisture content	84.43±3.09		
<b>Mineral Composition (mg/100g)</b>				
1	<b>K</b>	67.60±4.91		Ikpeazu <i>et al.</i> , 2019
2	<b>Ca</b>	25.81±1.86		
3	<b>P</b>	7.23±0.60		
4	<b>Mg</b>	2.92±0.62		
5	<b>Na</b>	5.29±0.94		
6	<b>Fe</b>	13.50±1.40		
7	<b>Zn</b>	0.82±0.05		
<b>Phytochemicals (%)</b>				
1	Alkaloid	0.98±0.13	Ikpeazu <i>et al.</i> , 2019	
2	Saponin	2.03±0.25		
3	Tannin	1.68±0.18		
4	Flavonoid	1.05±0.13		
5	Phenols	0.42±0.07		
6	Oxalate	0.61±0.07		
7	Phytate	0.37±0.03		

**Table 2:** Chemical Composition of some Eggplants from non-African Cultivars

Parameter	American Eggplant	Chinese Eggplant	Indian Eggplant	Thai Eggplant	Philippines Eggplant	Ref.
Crude Protein (g/100g)	0.67 ± 0.13	0.65 ± 0.06	0.75 ± 0.05	0.90 ± 0.07	0.69 ± 0.09	Guillermo <i>et al.</i> , 2014; Sharma and Kaushik, 2021
Total Phenolic content (mg/100g)	1512.5	1350.0	1750.0	2049.8	1562.7	Guillermo <i>et al.</i> , 2014; Okmen <i>et al.</i> , 2009
<b>Minerals (mg/100g)</b> Guillermo <i>et al.</i> , 2014; Sharma and Kaushik, 2021						
K	152.15	151.21	191.18	176.46	121.06	Guillermo <i>et al.</i> , 2014; Sharma and Kaushik, 2021
Ca	31.36	28.00	59.63	45.08	32.80	
P	29.61	21.21	33.52	30.42	13.80	
Mg	25.35	15.29	28.96	20.88	15.74	
Na	8.49	9.40	11.54	5.62	5.76	
Fe	0.86	2.40	1.53	1.80	3.13	
Zn	0.51	0.33	0.78	0.45	0.26	
Mn	0.41	0.36	0.44	0.39	0.30	
Cu	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.18	0.13	

The cultural significance of garden-eggplant mystics, also known as "Ofe," in sustaining the physical and spiritual well-being of the Igbo people residing in the

Akabo Area is worthy of note. This distinctive botanical specimen presents a unique opportunity to enhance the collective well-being and fitness of the

populace (Opara, 2018). Ultimately, every household within the locality made a contribution by providing a plant for the communal garden. It is a prevalent practice among individuals to use it as a means of demonstrating their altruistic disposition towards unfamiliar people. It is customary for it to be presented at any form of conventional festivity. The garden egg plant is commonly referred to as "Ofe" in local parlance, with a semantic association to the term "soup." The plant or shrub in question is known as "Anara" or "Afufara" in certain adjacent regions. It is distinguished by its exceptional ability to bestow a mystical and divine power upon those who come into contact with it, including humans, animals, insects, and avian species, resulting in a sense of enjoyment and well-being.

The garden egg is a culturally significant crop for the residents of Akabo, a locality situated in the eastern region of Nigeria. It is linked to a mythological tale that revolves around a young woman named Nwekwe. Per the account passed down through oral tradition, Akabo, the male progenitor, sired a total of four progeny. Three male offspring were responsible for procreation, resulting in an increase in population and the formation of three separate autonomous societies recognised as Abazu, Amaiyi, and Umuiyi. The only female progeny, Nwekwe, was subjected to neglect and ostracization. After her demise, a series of unfortunate events occurred, leading to the deaths of a significant number of young women in Akabo (Opara, 2018). Consequently, an oracle was consulted. The outcome manifested as a conciliatory gesture directed towards the revered deities and ancestors of Nwekwe. The regional leader issued a formal declaration to acknowledge and honour Nwekwe, who consumed substantial quantities of garden egg leaves, extracted the verdant sap, proceeded to the communal sanctuary, and expressed herself through vocalizations and choreographed motions to establish her innocence. She consistently participated in these activities during the early morning hours until her passing. Raising awareness about the dietary habits of the late Nwekwe is crucial, as it has been reported that she relied exclusively on aubergine foliage and fruit for sustenance. The customary yearly communal celebration began with a formal ceremony that was accessible to all unmarried women. The primary goal was to provide adolescent females with suitable education and guidance in preparation for marriage. The Ofe ceremony was restricted to individuals between the ages of twelve and fifteen, as deemed appropriate by cultural norms. The Ira Ofe was the designated nomenclature used to refer to the Ofe ritual. The phrase can be interpreted denotatively as the action of ingesting a liquid food item that usually

comprises vegetables, meat, or grains in a broth or creamy foundation (Opara, 2018). The enigmatic quality of the ritual is attributed to the evaluation procedure employed to assess the suitability of adolescent females for involvement. The process entails the utilization of a vacant enigmatic vessel referred to as Oloko, in addition to the administration of pledges at the communal sanctuary, as a means of exhibiting their lack of guilt and unblemished character. The Ira Ofe maiden ceremony confers various benefits, such as equipping young women with the necessary skills and knowledge to enter into marriage, fostering a sense of togetherness and advancement, nurturing a sense of brotherly affection and chastity, and facilitating the identification of a compatible life partner.

The study is centered on the indigenous garden egg variety that is cultivated, sown, and nurtured in Akabo, a region in Igbo land. The aforementioned entities being referred to are 'Anara', 'Afufa', and 'Ofe'. The specimens exhibit a greenish hue, possess a delicate texture, display a subtle bitter taste, and are characterized by diminutive dimensions. The leaves can be consumed in their raw state, as can the fruits and stalk, and are amenable to cooking over an open flame. The garden eggplant is commonly classified as a vegetable. The cultural importance of *Solanum aethiopicum*, commonly known as garden eggs, is held in high regard by the indigenous people of Akabo, who trace their ancestry to the Igbo ethnic group (Opara, 2018). Naturally, it is used to showcase auspiciousness and fecundity. Kola is a customary offering that is often presented during visits, ceremonies, and other social gatherings as a gesture of goodwill. Vegetables possess the versatility to be utilized in the preparation of soups, stews, and sauces in their fresh, fried, or raw forms. The treatment of weight loss, catarrh, rheumatism, skin conditions, digestive issues, and certain allergies to garden eggs necessitates their utilization. During the premodern era, the inhabitants of Akabo, located in the eastern region of Nigeria, celebrated a festival known as "Ira-Ofe," which involved the consumption of soup. A traditional ritual was performed as a prelude to matrimony. In the Igbo language, the term "Ofe" refers to a type of soup, while "Ira-Ofe" signifies the act of consuming soup. The young women consume a verdant condiment extracted from the foliage of the garden egg. The garden eggplant is a versatile resource that yields various benefits, including nutritional value for the body, medicinal properties for holistic well-being, entertainment for guests, and a festival that celebrates the preparation of young women for marriage. Garden-egg plants serve as a means of livelihood for households.

*Economic Importance of Garden Egg:* Garden egg offers a wide range of economic values such as its use as food supplement to provide some nutrients, vitamins and minerals. It serves as a source of income to families, entertainment of guests, marriage rites of young maidens and for health purposes.

*Garden Egg as Food Supplements:* Garden egg nourishes the body. It is considered to be a valuable source of crucial nutrients, including fiber, potassium, vitamin B<sub>1</sub> (thiamin), vitamin B<sub>6</sub> (niacin), and bioflavonoids. These nutrients are known to play a significant role in supporting the optimal functioning of the heart (Sharma and Kaushik, 2021). The substantial quantities of vitamins B<sub>1</sub> and B<sub>6</sub> present in garden eggs play a crucial role in sustaining a sound cardiovascular system by optimizing the functioning of both the nervous and cardiovascular systems. The eggs obtained from one's garden are a valuable dietary source of B-complex vitamins, which are recognized for their significant contribution to reproductive health. Several reports indicate that they confer advantages for reproductive capacity in both genders. The stem of the garden aubergine contains a diverse range of essential minerals and vitamins, such as potassium, sodium, copper, phosphorus, calcium, iron, sulphur, and magnesium, in addition to vitamins A, D, E, B<sub>6</sub>, and B<sub>12</sub>. According to Ogunka-Nnoka and Ekrika (2018), these entities serve as nourishing agents for the human body. Vegetables hold significant importance in a diet owing to their role in promoting a balanced and healthy dietary regimen. Numerous species of garden egg plants have been identified as potential sources of protein-rich foods and medicinal herbs.

*Garden-Egg as Source of Income:* The majority of individuals rely on their farms as their primary source of income, with a significant portion of them generating revenue through the cultivation of a substantial quantity of garden eggs. A diverse array of garden egg varieties is cultivated to cater to the multifarious demands of society. Upon commercial harvesting of garden egg leaves, the plant derives the necessary nutrients for the regrowth of new leaves from its stalks. Following the pruning of the stalks to stimulate the emergence of supplementary stalks, it is occasionally customary to sever them for commercial purposes prior to the subsequent pruning cycle. *Solanum melongena*, commonly known as the garden eggplant, produces copious amounts of fruit (Okoye, 2019). The agriculturalist gathers the produce with the intention of preparing it for commercialization in the retail and wholesale markets. The dish known as "abacha" is prepared by combining the leaf, stalk, and

fruits of the garden egg with boiled and sliced cassava root (Okon *et al.*, 2010). This culinary creation is renowned for its ability to provide immediate satiety. The preparation of this item in bulk quantities enables its distribution to food vendors situated in diverse market locations, restaurants, institutions, hotels, and business centers for retail purposes. The revenue generated from the vending of eggs that were cultivated in a garden can be utilized to finance the construction of domiciles and the procurement of diverse household essentials.

*Entertainment of Guests:* Occasionally, eggs sourced from a garden can elicit amusement from visitors and guests. Incorporating them into one's dietary regimen is a facile task, and they can be consumed in their uncooked state. A sizable portion of the Nigerian population regularly consumes garden eggs, frequently with groundnut paste or as part of their meals. Each participant in a sizable assembly is provided with a garden egg to consume as a revitalizing refreshment throughout the occasion. Prior to being arranged on a tray or plate and presented to consumers, the garden eggplant's produce is subjected to a washing process. This dish is commonly served alongside alligator paper, fried groundnuts, or paste (Ogunka-Nnoka and Ekrika, 2018). The garden egg plant's fruits can be considered substantial and satisfying in their raw state, owing to their considerable size. The preparation of garden eggs can involve slicing the fruits into small pieces, along with onions and garden egg leaves. Boneless, dry fish is washed and added to the mixture, along with fermented sliced oil bean fruit, stocked fish, and seasoning with pepper and salt to taste. The ingredients are then combined in a bowl with lukewarm water and potassium. This represents an additional technique for the preparation of garden eggs. The Akabo community's indigenous Igbo population regards this particular cuisine as a palatable delicacy. The aim of this initiative is to cordially receive individuals of indigenous origin who reside outside their homeland and guarantee a favorable encounter. The dish is consistently prepared in a similar fashion for both invited guests, in-laws, and visiting friends and is commonly accompanied by palm wine. It is feasible to modify the dish to serve as a more low-calorie option for family consumption. The culinary preparation denominated "local salad" is comprised of eggs and fresh vegetables cultivated in a garden. Abacha, which refers to sliced cassava that has been prepared beforehand, is incorporated into the mixed garden egg dish to enhance its texture and render it consumable in its final state. Additionally, they are commonly presented as kola, serving as a gesture of goodwill during social gatherings,

ceremonies, and visits. These fruits can be consumed in various forms, such as fresh, fried, or raw. They are utilized in the creation of soups, stews, and sauces, which are served to the participants of the tea ceremony.

*Marriage Rites for Young Maidens:* Garden egg serves in marriage preparation for maidens. The denizens indigenous to Akabo, a locality situated in the southeastern region of Nigeria, were observed partaking in festivities to commemorate Ira Ofe, a cultural event that entails the consumption of soup. The term "ofe" in the Igbo language denotes the concept of soup, while "ira" refers to the act of drinking. The raw soup made from garden egg leaves is a distinctive and exceptional dish that is traditionally prepared for the Ofe ritual. The observed coloration exhibits a tint of green. As per Opara's (2014) assertion, the term "Ira ofe" is literally translated to mean "leaking 'Ofe' garden egg leaf soup". The Ofe ritual was restricted to young females who had attained a minimum age of ten years and a maximum age of fifteen years. The maidens were provided with a beverage made by extracting a watery sap with a slightly greenish hue from the leaves of the garden egg through squeezing. Irrespective of the day, the aforementioned task was habitually executed as the initial activity of the day. The raw soup was served by ladling it into clay bowls. Each individual utilized a small spoon composed of goldsmith's metal and performed the procedure four times, guaranteeing that the soup did not make contact with their dentition. The task was executed in a sequential manner, commencing with the initial individual and culminating with the final individual retrieving her own. Subsequently, all individuals rose simultaneously with the intention of preparing for the day's events. According to Opara (2014), this event occurs annually within the initial four weeks of the month of July. The Ira Ofe ceremony, which is also referred to as the consumption of garden soup, was a customary rite that facilitated the readiness of young women for their impending nuptials. The occasion was denoted as a maiden ceremony. The aim was to reduce the general prevalence of unethical behavior in the community while also encouraging adolescents to pursue virtuous lifestyles prior to engaging in long-term partnerships. The practice of celibacy in Ira Ofe is often attributed to the historical accounts of Nwekwe, an ancestor who is said to have founded the community and lived a life of celibacy, according to prevalent myths. According to historical accounts, this forebear is credited with the founding of Ira Ofe. The ceremony was conducted with the complete participation of the participants, a practice that is disapproved of in Christian culture as well as in

certain contemporary societies. The Ira Ofe was a customary ritual performed with the aim of equipping young women with the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate their future roles as married women. The process of preparation was conducted through a ceremonial practice known as Ira Ofe. The ingestion of a substantial amount of garden eggplant leaves endows prospective brides with a plethora of nutrients and medicinal properties, thereby facilitating the maintenance of optimal physical, mental, and spiritual well-being prior to and following their nuptials.

*Medicinal Use of Garden Egg:* Garden egg serves as medication for the wellness of the body. The garden egg is a readily cultivable vegetable crop that has been demonstrated to possess anti-ulcer properties in experimental studies (Gürbüz *et al.*, 2018). Due to their inherent characteristics, garden eggs can serve as a cost-effective option for a natural anti-ulcer treatment. The fruit of the garden egg is abundant in dietary fiber, which contributes to the maintenance of a healthy digestive system. In addition, it aids in the mitigation of constipation and various gastrointestinal issues, such as bloating and flatulence. Due to their efficacy in reducing blood glucose levels, eggs sourced from a garden are a highly recommended dietary option for individuals with diabetes. This mechanism has the capability to reduce the absorption of glucose by the body, thereby leading to a subsequent decrease in the level of blood glucose. Furthermore, it contains carbohydrates that exhibit low solubility. The Garden Egg fruit is characterized by a notable fiber content as well as a relatively low protein and calorie content. These properties are believed to play a significant role in the reduction of excess body fat. Garden-fresh raw eggs contain a mere 25 calories and 4 grams of dietary fiber per 100 grams, rendering them a highly favorable dietary option for individuals striving to achieve weight loss goals (Ayodele, 2018). Consuming this particular fruit can induce a rapid satiety response and potentially reduce the frequency of food cravings. According to Nwokolo (2023), the reduction of overall body fat can be facilitated through its helpfulness. The leaves of the garden eggplant have been found to possess properties that aid in the prevention of anemia. Anemia is a prevalent hematologic condition characterized by a diminished quantity of healthy red blood cells (RBCs) in the circulatory system, leading to inadequate oxygen delivery to the body's tissues. This condition may be attributed to a deficiency in iron or vitamins. Anemia is often associated with a range of symptoms, including but not limited to headaches, fatigue, weakness, and depression. According to finelib.com, eggs obtained from a garden are a valuable source of iron that can aid in the prevention and management of

ailments such as anemia and iron deficiency. This is due to their ability to stimulate the production of red blood cells in the body. The garden eggplant is a plant that offers both its fruits and stalk as sources of minerals and vitamins, which are beneficial for enhancing bone and muscle strength. Calcium intake has been shown to enhance bone strength and increase bone mineral density, facilitate muscle contraction, regulate bodily fluids, and perform various other functions that are crucial for the optimal functioning of bones and muscles, thereby promoting overall well-being. Several studies have indicated that consuming a moderate quantity of garden eggs can potentially mitigate bone loss, osteoporosis, and other bone-related ailments. The garden eggplant is a fiber-rich food that is believed to have potential for reducing the likelihood of developing digestive ailments such as constipation as well as cardiovascular diseases like atherosclerosis, heart attacks, and strokes. The reason for this phenomenon is that fiber traverses the lumen of the blood vessels, leading to a reduction in the concentration of atherogenic low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol and consequently augmenting the efficacy of the cardiovascular system.

The improvement of one's eyesight is advantageous. The garden egg's cream-colored flesh is characterized by a flavor profile that can be described as pleasantly bitter. The presence of nicotinoid alkaloids in garden eggs is responsible for the distinctive taste of this vegetable. The spongy texture of the object in question is a contributing factor to the enhancement of visual acuity and prevention of vision impairment caused by glaucoma, as per Bosire's research conducted in 2023. The garden eggplant offers medicinal benefits for weight loss, catarrh, rheumatism, skin diseases, digestive difficulties, and certain allergies. Additionally, it serves as a source of entertainment for visitors.

*Conclusion:* The garden egg is believed to possess significant and potent mystical healing properties. The inhabitants of Akabo, a town situated in the eastern region of Nigeria and predominantly inhabited by the Igbo community, are experiencing significant advantages from the utilization of the divine shrub of garden eggplant. The garden eggplant is inherently rich in a diverse array of nutrients, minerals, and vitamins, including but not limited to vitamins B6, C, A, and B12. Notably, the stalk of the garden eggplant has been found to contain higher concentrations of these essential nutrients. Furthermore, it is available for acquisition at a relatively inexpensive price. The global recognition and appreciation of the therapeutic properties of the garden eggplant are well established. The plant possesses the ability to inhibit the formation

of ulcers. Additionally, its fruits are rich in dietary fiber, thereby promoting digestive health. Incorporating eggs from one's personal garden into the dietary regimen can be highly advantageous for individuals diagnosed with diabetes. This intervention has been found to be efficacious in reducing blood glucose levels, promoting weight reduction, and preventing the onset of anemia. Additional pharmaceuticals encompass remedies for catarrh, rheumatism, dermatological ailments, gastrointestinal complications, and specific hypersensitivities. Furthermore, these pharmaceuticals are employed as adjuncts to facilitate weight reduction. The perennial nature of the garden egg, a remarkable plant, ensures its sustained availability. In order to entertain guests, the fruits can be utilized in two effective ways: consumption in their raw state or incorporation into a salad dish, both of which can be accompanied by a serving of palm wine. Both the stems and foliage of this plant exhibit a high nutritional content and can be utilized in the preparation of savory soups, both of thin and thick consistency, incorporating a diverse array of seasonings. The soup is composed of a delectable mixture of rice, plantains, potatoes, and yams that have been finely mashed into a pulp. The garden egg's significance culminates in its fundamental role in the preparation of maidens for their wedding celebration. The aforementioned functions serve as the fundamental basis for the significance of the garden egg. It is recommended to develop a routine of consistently consuming eggs from one's garden to sustain the health advantages linked with this practice. These can be consumed in their raw form or cooked through frying, and they can also be utilized in the cooking of stews, soups, and sauces.

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