

## **A compositional study of moringa stenopetala leaves**

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### **Abstract**

Objective: To investigate nutrient composition in moringa leaves and compare with those of kale (*Brassica carinata*) and Swiss chard (*Beta vulgaris*). Design: Laboratory based study, nutrient composition of fresh and cooked leaves of *M. stenopetala* were analyzed. Setting: Gama-Gofa, south-western Ethiopia. Results: Raw *M. stenopetala* leaves contain 9% dry matter as crude protein, about 3- fold lower than in kale and swiss chard. *M. stenopetala* leaves contain higher percentage of carbohydrate, crude fiber and calcium compared to both raw and cooked kale and swiss chard. Vitamins are present at nutritionally significant levels averaging 28mg/100g of vitamin C and 160 J..lg/100g of Il-car-otenc. Minerals such as potassium, iron, zinc, phosphorus and calcium also exist in significant concentrations with the average values of 3.08 mg/100g iron and 792.8 mg/100g calcium. Conclusion: Although the nutrient composition of *M. stenopetala* leaves in most cases is lower compared to kale and swiss chard they can be a good source of nutrients in dry season potentially when other vegetables are scarce. However, the presence of small amount of cyanogenic glucosides in *M. steuopetala* leaves may have a health risk in areas of high incidence of endemic goitre as an exacerbating factor if consumed more for a long period of time.