

# Morphological characterization of yam varietal group "Pémonon" of *Dioscorea cayenensis-rotundata* species in Burkina Faso

Siédou SORY<sup>1</sup>, Renan Ernest TRAORE<sup>1</sup>, Nerbéwendé SAWADOGO<sup>1</sup>, Djakaridia TIAMA<sup>1</sup>, Afoussatou ZERBO<sup>1</sup>, Mahamadou SAWADOGO<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

The present study described fifteen (15) cultivars of yams of the varietal group "Pémonon" cultivated in Burkina Faso. Twenty-seven (27) qualitative characters, ten (10) from the stems, nine (9) from the leaves, five (5) from the tubers and three (3) from the flowers were used to characterize the collection. The experimental design was Randomized Complete Block Design replicated three times. The experiment was carried out during 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 seasons at the village of Onliassan, in the province of Sissili. The study showed a large phenotypical diversity. These collected qualitative data allowed to classify these cultivars into the complex of *Dioscorea cayenensis-rotundata* species and to identify new nine (9) cultivars.

**Keywords:** Cultivars, *Dioscorea cayenensis rotundata*, morphotypes, yams, Burkina Faso

<sup>1</sup> Laboratoire Biosciences, Université Joseph KI-ZERBO, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

\*Corresponding author  
siedoumafes@gmail.com

Received 28/07/2022  
Accepted 02/09/2022

## INTRODUCTION

In West Africa, the yams of the complex *Dioscorea cayenensis-rotundata* represent more than 95% of the total production with a significant varietal and genetic diversity (Zoundjihékpon, 1993; Dumont *et al.*, 2005). Thus, the yam plays a dominating role as subsistence and commercial crop with a high sociocultural importance (Baco, 2004). II The richness of its tubers in carbohydrates, proteins, vitamins and rock salt, makes it the principal source of carbohydrate for millions of populations (Mignouna *et al.*, 2002; Lawal *et al.*, 2012; Adejumo *et al.*, 2013).

However, yam cultivation is faced to numerous biotic and abiotic constraints leading to production declines. In Burkina Faso, yam occupies an important place in the food production of local populations in the areas where it is grown. However, yam cultivation in Burkina Faso is subjected to the biotic and abiotic constraints hampering its production. Difficulties related to the conservation of harvested tubers are faced by yam growers (Sory, 2019). To these major constraints, we note the lack of knowledge of the cultivars encountered in Burkina Faso (Tiama, 2016). Nowadays, climate change leads to more frequent droughts, which forces producers to cultivate on less fertile soils and the need of tolerant or resistant cultivars use in order to adapt to the current climatic variability. These cultivars are those found and used by producers in the various traditional agro systems. Such cultivars are held by farmers without any scientific knowledge of their botanical characteristics. Furthermore, in Burkina Faso, some producers classify cultivars into a varietal groups (Sory, 2019). For example, the *Pémonon* varietal group in the local language Gourounsi consists of fifteen (15) cultivars characterized by the round shape of the stem, according to producers (Sory, 2019). This endogenous classification based solely on the shape of the stem could be deepened by using other descriptors of the yam in order to better describe the cultivars for a better varietal knowledge. This varietal

knowledge will allow the valorization and conservation of yams grown in Burkina Faso.

The description of these cultivars grown in different traditional agro ecosystems will allow the safeguarding of this genetic heritage as well as its use in breeding programs. Moreover, information on the diversity of yams in Burkina Faso is almost non-existent due to the absence of in-depth studies at the national level. Scientific knowledge is limited to yams grown in the Passoré region (Tiama, 2016). It is to fill the gaps related to the lack of scientific data on yams grown on a large scale that this study was initiated. Thus, the general objective of this study is to contribute to the knowledge of yams of the *Pémonon* varietal group cultivated in the south and southwest of Burkina Faso using morphological markers. Specifically, it will describe the specific characteristics of the cultivars of this varietal group and give their botanical classification.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

### Plant material

The plant material comes from three provinces, namely Comoé, Nounbiel, and Sissili. It consists of 15 cultivars of the *Pémonon* varietal group in the national language Gourounsi.

### Methodology

#### Experimental site

The trial was conducted during the 2019-2020 season in the village of Onliassan in the Sissili province (Figure 1). This village is located in the southern zone of the province at 585305 longitude and 1223498 latitude with a rainfall ranging from 900 to over 1000 mm (FAO, 1980). Texturally, the soils of the province are mainly composed of clay, silt and sand (FAO, 1980). However, the soil of our site is sandy-silty and therefore suitable for yam cultivation.

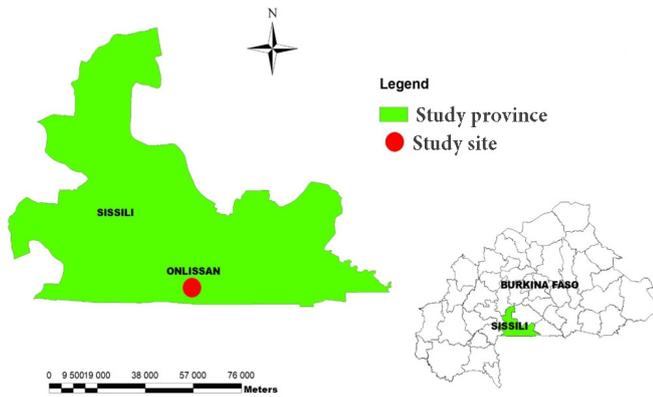


Figure 1: Site of the study

**Experimental design**

The experimental design used was the Fisher block design, completely randomized with three repetitions.

**Data collection**

A total of 27 qualitative variables were collected. These were the shape and color of the stems, the shape and color of the leaves, the shape, color and flesh of the tubers

The observations were made at all the developmental stages of the plants, i.e. the juvenile stage, maturity and after the harvest, i.e. at the level of the tubers.

**Data analysis**

The collected data were entered and processed using Excel spreadsheet; the descriptive analysis was done using R software 3.6.1.

**RESULTS**

**Morphological variations**

**Morphological variations of seedlings**

*At the level of the stem*

At emergence, the color of the young stem was the character that presented more modalities. Thus we had green (33.3%), green-white (33.3%), brown (26.7%) and purple (6.7%) stems (Photo 2). Regarding the presence of thorns, 60% of the cultivars have thorns and 40% do not.

At young leaves scale, two colors were observed, namely green (86.7%) and brown (13.3%). For the mode of insertion of the leaves, 66.7% of the cultivars presented



Photo 2: Stem colors at the juvenile stage

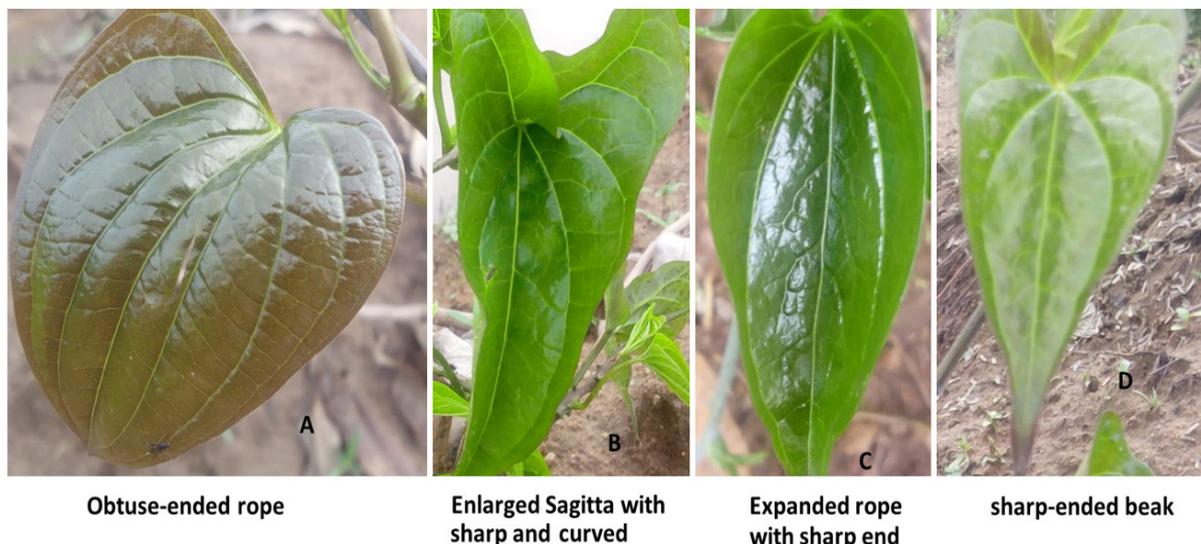


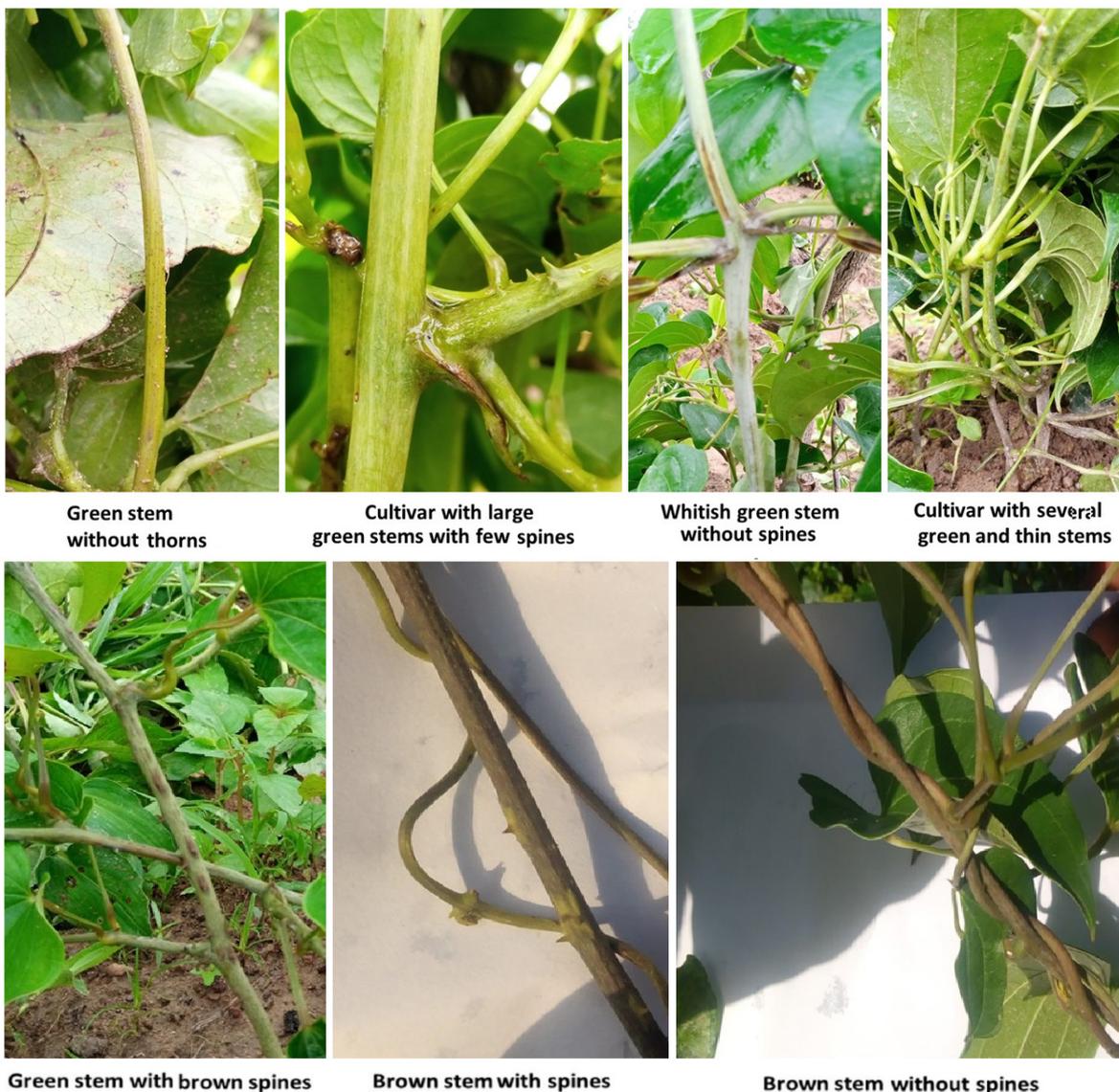
Photo 3: Different colors and shapes of leaves in the juvenile stage

opposite leaves, 2% alternate leaves and 20% presented both modalities at the same time. The shape of the leaves presented four modalities namely corded with obtuse tip, corded enlarged with sharp tip, sagittate enlarged with sharp tip and curved and hastate with sharp tip (Photo 3).

**Morphological variations of plants at the adult stage**

*At the level of the stem*

At the adult stage, the majority of cultivars had a green stem (60%) and 40% had a brown stem (Photo 4).



*Photo 4: Aspects and colors of the stems at the adult stage*



*Photo 5: Different colors of leaf blades*

**At the leaf level**

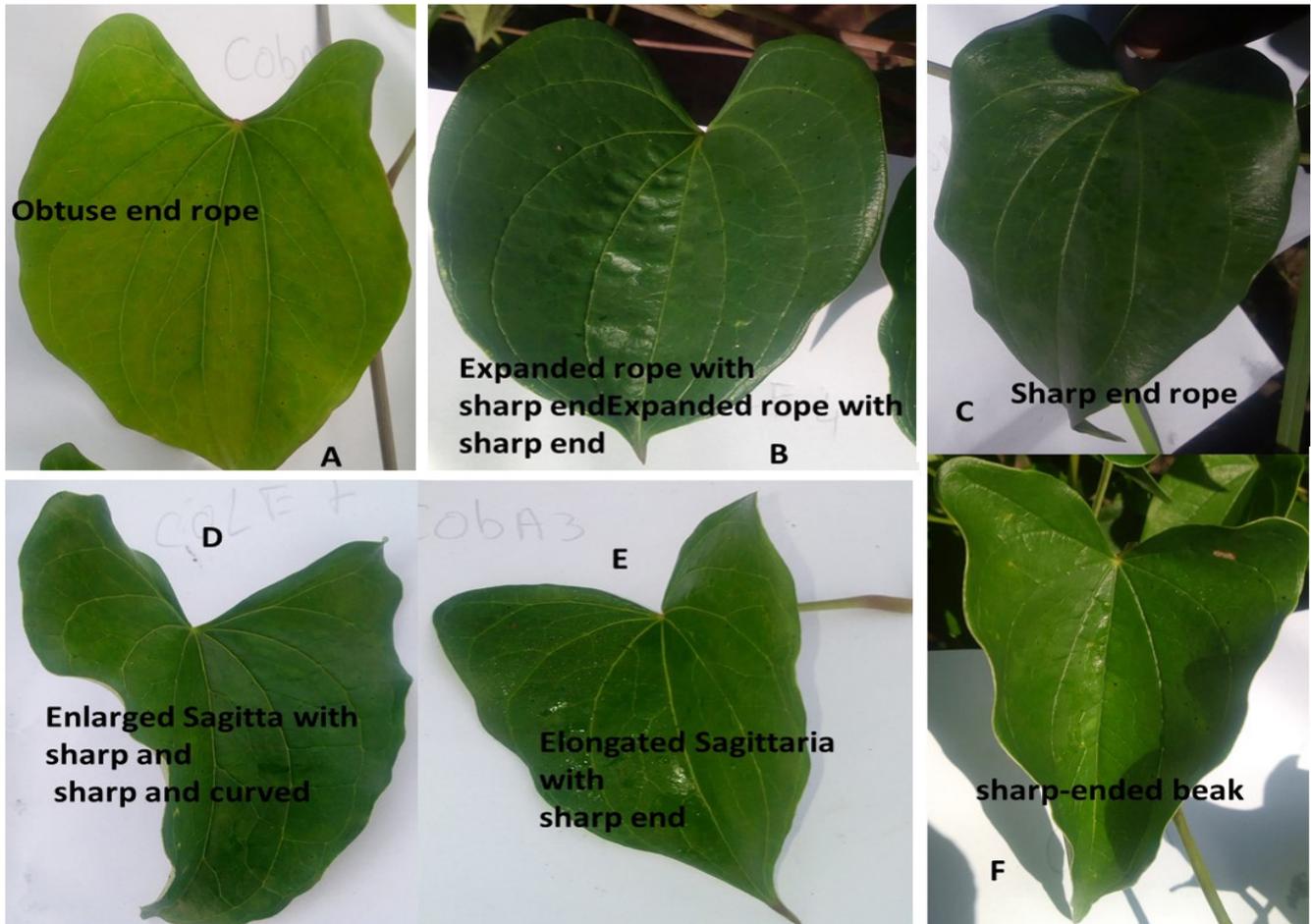
The petioles presented four modalities, green (53.3%), green-brown (26.7%), green-purple (13.3%) and light-green (6.7 %). For the color of the foliage the cultivars presented two modalities: green (66.7%), light green (26.7%), dark green (6.7%) (Photo 5).

Three leaf shapes with variants were observed, namely the cordate shape (50 %) (obtuse-tipped, expanded cordate sharp-tipped, cordate sharp-tipped), the sagittate

shape (30 %) (expanded sharp-tipped and curved, elongated sagittate sharp-tipped) and the hastate sharp-tipped shape (20 %) (Photo 6).

**At the flowering level**

As regards to the flowering, 66.7 % of the cultivars did not flower and 33.3 % flowered. The mode of appearance of the flowers were among others raceme (13.3 %) and the panicle mode (20.0 %). Through the types of flowers, we had male plants (21.4 %) and female plants (14.3 %) (Photo 7).



*Photo 6: Different phenologies of the leaves*



*Photo 7: Different inflorescences*

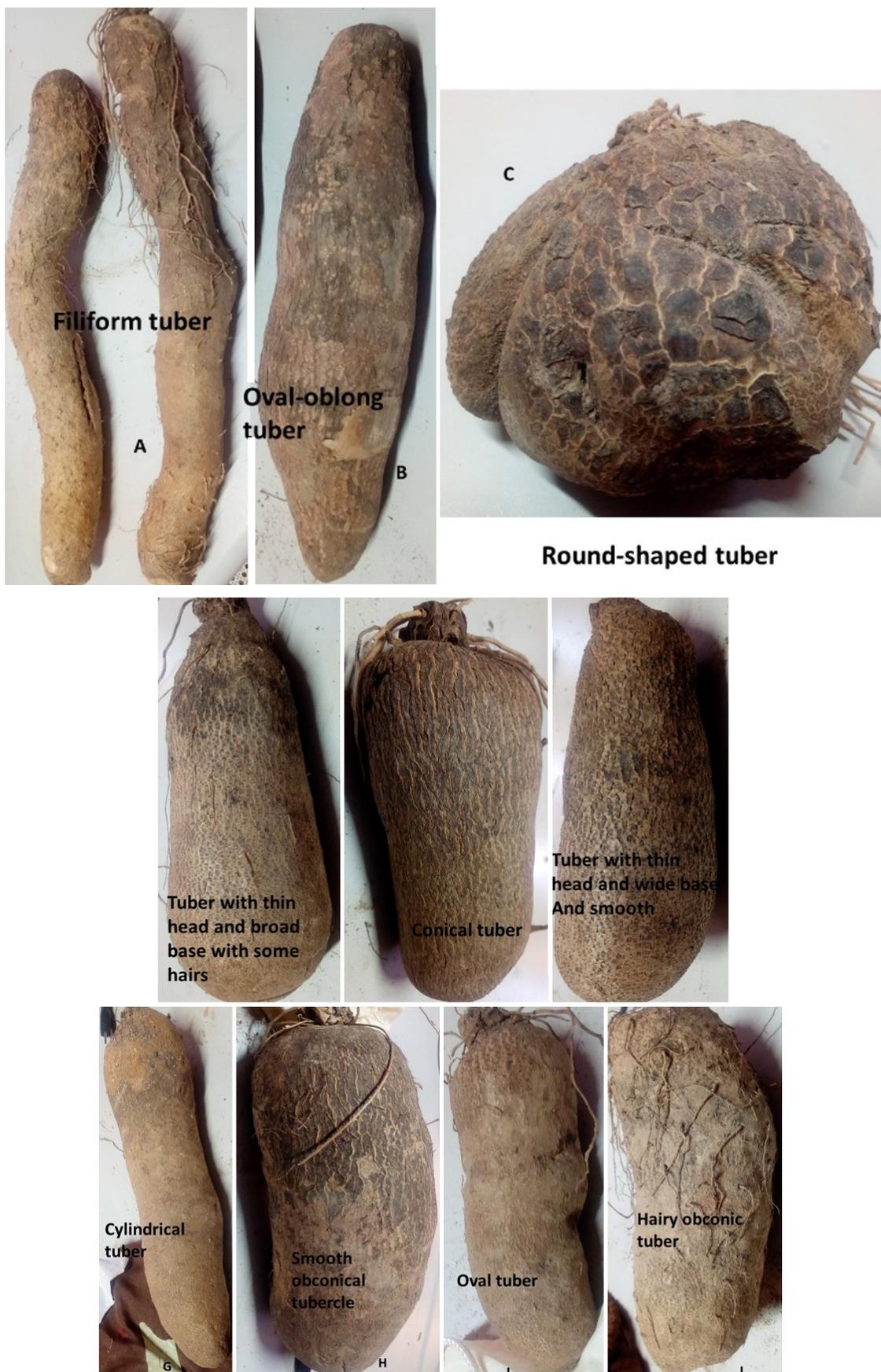
**Morphological variations of tubers at harvest**

**Tuber shape and skin color**

At harvest, the shape of the tubers presented nine modalities, namely rounded (6.7 %), oval (13.3 %), cylindrical (26.7 %), obconical (6.7 %), conical (13.3 %), thin-headed tuber with a broad base (6.7 %) and

oval-oblong (13.3 %) (Photo 8). Some tubers had bloom (40%), but the majority had no bloom and had striae (60 %). More than half of the tubers had hairs (73.3%) and (26.7 %) did not.

The skin color presented two modalities which are brown (73.3%) and dark brown (26.7%).



*Photo 8: Different shapes of tubers*

### Color of the flesh

The color of the flesh presented six modalities namely white-yellow (33.3 %), white (26.7 %), off-white (6.66%), white-purple (13.3 %), yellow (6.7 %) and light yellow (66.7%) (Photo 9).

### DISCUSSION

Among the twenty-seven (27) morphological markers used to characterize the cultivars of the Pémonon varietal group of yam, only those related to the tubers were highly discriminating. The cultivars of the “Pémonon” group presented very discriminating characteristics with thorny on the one hand and without spines on the other hand, the whole leaves, simple and cordate, opposite or alternate.... These variables were described by Hamon *et al.* (1988) as stable at the level of the genus *Dioscorea* and can be chosen as varietal or species criteria.

The round shape of the stems is the common character of the cultivars in this group. At the adult stage, the color and the aspect of the stem, the color and the shape of the leaves were very discriminating with respectively five and six modalities. Thus, in this varietal group, at the juvenile stage, the color of the young stem was more discriminating and allows us to distinguish four cultivars. The first is characterized by a whitish green stem with spines and green cordate leaves (33.3 %). The second is characterized by a young thin brown stem with thin brown leaves (26.8 %). The third is characterized by a young light-green spine bearing stem with cordate and light-green leaves (33.3 %). The last cultivar is characterized by a purple young stem with cordate and green leaves (0.06%). These characters were used by Wembou

*et al.* in 2017 to differentiate cultivars of the species *D. cayenensis-rotundata* in Togo.

Any yam, whole leaf, grown in West Africa for its tuber, is classified in the species complex *D. cayenensis - D. rotundata* (Hamon *et al.*, 1986; Zoundjihékpon, 1993; Dumont *et al.*, 2010). Coursey in 1976, classified round-stemmed yams in the species complex *D. cayenensis - D. rotundata*. Our results corroborate those of Zoundjihékpon, Hamon and Dumon. The 66% flowering rate observed in the cultivars studied is slightly lower than that observed by Dansi in 2000 and Tostain in 2006 in Benin and by Zoundjihékpon in 1993 in Côte d'Ivoire. In their study conditions, more than 70% of cultivars of the *D. cayenensis - D. rotundata* species complex had flowered. The low flowering rate in our study could be explained by climatic factors. According to Yolou (2016), flowering is a parameter that is greatly influenced by climatic and soil factors such as rainfall, temperature, light, photoperiod and soil type.

At harvest, tuber characteristics were very discriminating with nine modalities for tuber shape and six modalities for flesh color. Some cultivars can be assimilated to yams already described by some authors in West Africa. Thus, we have a group of cultivars with cylindrical tubers with striations showing the presence of varieties of the “kponan” group described by Hamon *et al.* (1986).

The group of cultivars with bulky, ridged, thornless stems and oval-oblong tubers could be attached to the variety “agbalé” as described by Loko *et al.*, (2014). The group of cultivars with thick, stubby, ridged and very spiny stems at the base, with large obconical-shaped tubers could be attached to the varieties of the “krenglè” group

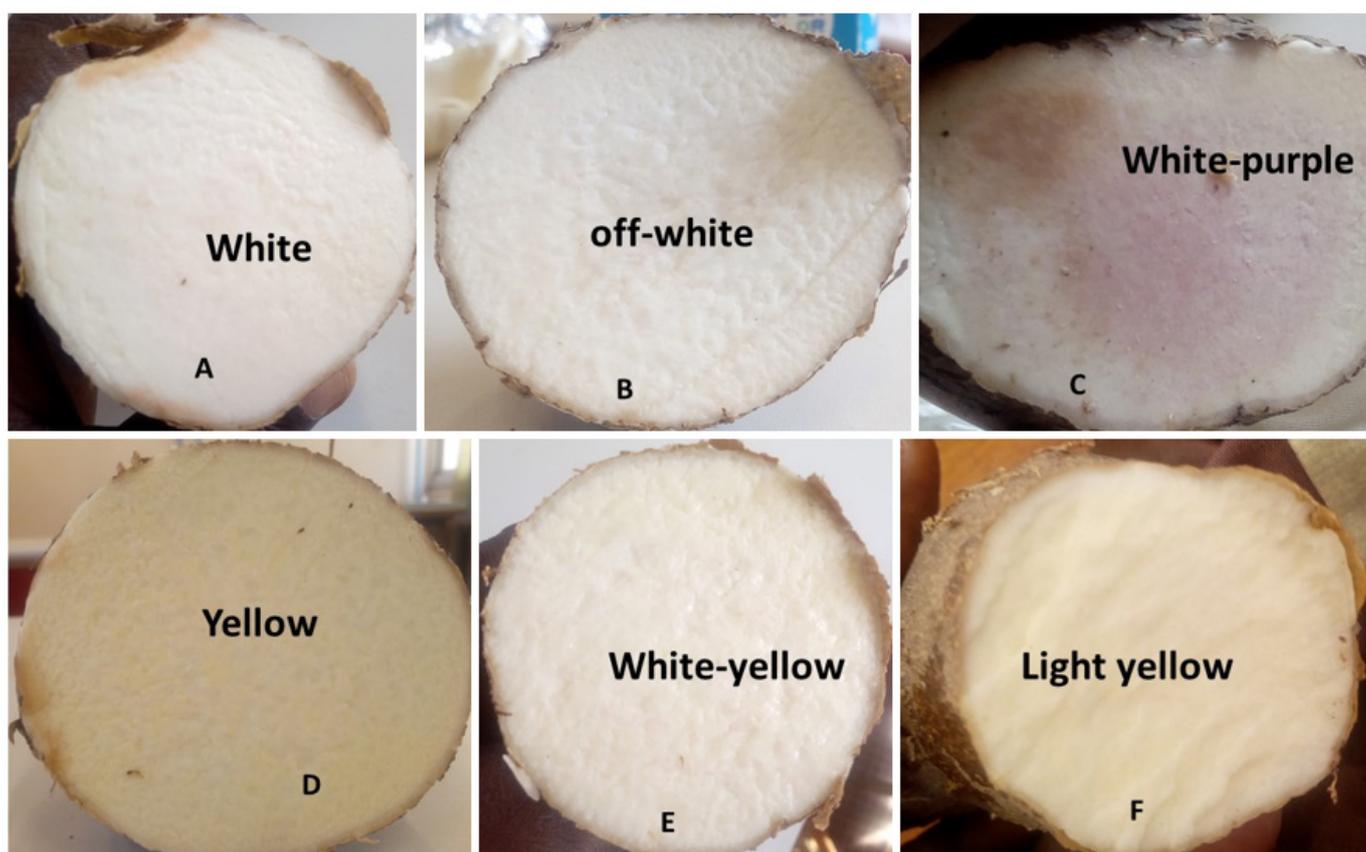


Photo 9: Different colors of tuber flesh

from Côte d'Ivoire and the "Boussa" group described by Tiama in 2016 in Burkina Faso. We also have the group of cultivars with a green, spiny stem with round tubers. The group of cultivars with a thin stem, weakly spiny at the base with cylindrical tubers called by producers "Pémoumonlo" or smooth skin in the local Gourounsi language. Tubers with a smooth brown surface and white flesh are classified in the species *D. Rotundata* and tubers with yellowish flesh are classified in the species *D. cayenensis* according to Dumont *et al.*, 2006; Zoundjihekpon, 1993 et Vernier et Dansi, 2006. Thus, we can say that the *Pémoumon* varietal group contains both *D. Rotundata* and *D. cayenensis* yams.

## CONCLUSION

In this study, morphological approaches were used to assess genetic variability within the yam group 'Pémoumon' grown in Burkina Faso. The main characteristics of the cultivars studied are the round shape of the stems, the whole leaf and the yellow or white color of the tuber flesh. We note the presence of various subgroups including round and very thorny stems or not, round, elongated or obconical tubers and yellow or white flesh. At the end of our study, we can say that the characteristics presented by the cultivars of the group *Pémoumon* are those of the complex of species *D. cayenensis - D. rotundata*. Various studies conducted throughout the world have shown the great genetic diversity within this species. The study showed the presence of varietal groups such as "kponan" and "klenglé" in the south and southwest of Burkina Faso. Thus, ten morphotypes were identified in the 'Pémoumon' germplasm used by producers in Burkina Faso.

## REFERENCES

- Adejumo B.A., Okundare R.O., Afolayan O.I., Balogun S.A. (2013). Quality Attributes of Yam Flour (Elubo) as affected by blanching water temperature and soaking time. *Intl. J. Engr. Sci. (IJES)*, 2: 216-221.
- Baco M.N., Tostain S., Mongbo R.L., Daïnou O., Agbangla C. (2004). Gestion dynamique et la diversité variétale des ignames cultivées (*Dioscorea cayenensis - D. rotundata*) dans la commune de Sinendé au nord Bénin. *Plant Genetic Resources News?* 139: 18-24.
- Coursey D.G. (1976). The origins and domestication of yams in Africa. In: *Origins of African domestication*. Ed Harlan JR. Mouton Publisher. p. 383-408.
- Dansi A., Mignouna H.D., Zoundjihekpon J., Sangare A., Asiedu R., Ahoussou N. (2000). Using isozyme polymorphism to assess genetic variation within cultivated yams (*Dioscorea cayenensis/Dioscorea rotundata* complex) of the Republic of Benin. *Genetic Resources and Crop Evolution*, 47: 371-383.
- Dumont R., Vernier P., Zoundjihekpon J., (2010). Origine et diversité des ignames *Dioscorea rotundata* Poir. *Cahiers Agricultures*, 19: 255-261.
- FAO (1980). Création d'un service national des sols en Haute-Volta. Etat des connaissances des sols. Rapport technique 1. AG.DP/UPV/74/007. Rome.
- Hamon P., Hamon S., Toure B. (1986). Les ignames cultivées du complexe *Dioscorea cayenensis-rotundata* de Côte d'Ivoire. AGPC: IBPGR/86/153. p 63.
- IPGRI/IITA (1997). Descripteur de l'igname ( spp.). Institut international d'agriculture tropicale, Ibadan, Nigeria/Institut international des ressources phytogénétiques, Rome, Italie, 65 p.
- Lawal O.O., Agiang M.A., Eteng M.U. (2012). Proximate and anti-nutrient composition of white Guinea yam (*Dioscorea rotundata*) diets consumed in Ibarapa, South West region of Nigeria. *J. Nat. Prod. Plant Res.*, 2:256-260.
- Loko L., Adjatin A., Agré A.P., Dansi A. (2014). Evaluation participative des ignames cultivées (complexe *D. cayenensis - D. rotundata*) du Bénin et caractérisation agromorphologique des cultivars tolérants à la sécheresse, à l'excès d'humidité du sol et aux insectes de stockage des cossettes. Communication orale, CISL, 12-16 mai 2014.
- Mignouna HD, Mank RA, Ellis THN, Van Den Bosch N, Asiedu R, Abang MM, Peleman J. (2002). A genetic linkage map of water yam (*Dioscorea alata* L.) based on ALFP markers and QTL analysis for anthracnose resistance. *Theor. Appl. Genet.*, 105: 726-735.
- Scarcelli N. (2005). Structure et dynamique de la diversité d'une plante cultivée à multiplication végétative: le cas des ignames au Bénin (*Dioscorea sp.*). *Thèse de Doctorat*, 229 p.
- Sory S. (2019). Distribution, gestion et diversité des ignames cultivées (*Dioscorea*, sp) au Burkina Faso. Mastère de recherche en biosciences, Université Joseph KI-Zerbo, Burkina Faso, 83 pages.
- Tiama D. (2016). Diversité génétique des ignames *Dioscorea sp* du Burkina Faso: Yuyà du Passoré. Thèse de Doctorat, Université Ouaga I Pr Joseph KI-Zerbo, UFR/SVT, Burkina Faso. 171 p.
- Tiama D., Zoundjihekpon J., Sawadogo N., Nebie B., Bationo-Kando P., Sawadogo M., Zongo J.-D. (2016). Agro-morphological characterization of yams (*Dioscorea sp*) of Passoré in Burkina Faso. *J. Appl. Environ. Biol. Sci.*, 6:1-1.
- Tostain S., Andriamampandry H.V., Pintaud J.-C., Pham J.-L. (2010). Contribution à la phylogénie des ignames malgaches (*Dioscorea sp.*) à l'aide du polymorphisme de trois séquences d'ADN chloroplastiques intergéniques. Actes du colloque de Toliara, Madagascar, 29-31 juillet 2009. Tostain S., Rejo-Fienena F. (eds). Pp. 92-101.
- Vernier P., Dansi A. (2006). Participatory assessment of local yam cultivars (*D. cayenensis* and *D. rotundata*) in Benin. *PGR Newsletter*, 147: 38-46.
- Wembou E.P., K. Odah, A. Dansi, E. Kabiezim, K. Tozo, K. Akpanga. (2017). Diversité variétale et conservation des ignames cultivées (*Dioscorea cayenensis, Dioscorea rotundata* et *Dioscorea alata*) dans la région de la Kara (Togo). *Rev. Mar. Sci. Agron. Vét.*, 5: 391-399.
- Yolou M. (2016). Diversité génétique des ignames africaines cultivées (Complexe *Dioscorea cayenensis - D. rotundata* et *D. dumetorum*) et perception des paysans du Centre-Bénin des questions des droits de propriété intellectuelle. Thèse de Doctorat, Université d'abomey-calavi, 150 p.
- Zoundjihekpon J. (1993). Biologie de la reproduction et génétique des ignames cultivées de l'Afrique de l'Ouest, *Dioscorea cayenensis-rotundata*. Thèse de doctorat, Université Nationale de Côte d'Ivoire, 306 p.