Introduction

Tephrosia vogelii has been shown to exhibit insecticidal activities. These properties have been attributed to the presence of isoflavonoid rotenoids in various parts of the plant [1]. Some of the active ingredients responsible for and entomocidal effects in T. vogelii are believed to be rotenoids, which are rotenone (C_{22}H_{23}O_{6}) (Nagai, 1902; LaForge and Haller, 1932 [2,3]), deguelin (C_{23}H_{22}O_{6}), munetone (C_{26}H_{24}O_{5}) and tephrosin (C_{23}H_{22}O_{7}) [4,5,6,7] rotenolone (C_{23}H_{22}O_{7}) [8], toxicarol (C_{23}H_{22}O_{7}) [9], sumatrol (C_{23}H_{22}O_{7}) [10], malaccol (C_{20}H_{16}O_{7}) [11], elliptone (C_{20}H_{16}O_{6}) [12], rutin (C_{27}H_{30}O_{16}) [13] and quercetin (C_{15}H_{10}O_{7}) [14,15], flavonoids found mainly in leaves of T. vogelii, which has been shown to have deterrent effects on the feeding behavior, survival, and development of the fall armyworm Spodoptera frugiperda (Lepidoptera: Noctuidae) [16] and Rutin (quercitin 3-O-rutinoside), which has been shown to exhibit antibiotic and/or anti-feeding effect in several defoliating insects such as the sphinx moth Manduca sexta (Lepidoptera: Sphingidae) [17], the tobacco budworm Heliothis virescens (Lepidoptera: Noctuidae) [18] and the cabbage looper, Trichoplusia ni (Lepidoptera: Noctuidae) [19]. Rutin is well distributed in leaves of T. vogelii [14]. Its effects in slowing larval development of M. sexta is temperature dependent, being high at warm temperatures and slowed at low temperatures [20].

The rotenoids, especially rotenone has been shown to have low mammalian toxicity, and is extremely active as a contact and stomach poison against insect species in which it inhibits mitochondria electron transport [21]. In Kenya, where both cutaneous and visceral leishmaniases are endemic and are
transmitted by bites of infected female *Phlebotomus* sand flies, the efficacy of plants containing rotenoids in the control of sand flies have not been tested. This study aimed at testing the effects of sympatric *T. vogelii* species in the control of pre-emerginal stages of *P. duboscqi*, the vector for *Leishmania major* (Kinetoplastida: Trypanosomatidae) under laboratory conditions. The study was carried out using only the pre-emerginal stages because female adults feed on blood and both sexes suitable plant for carbohydrates [22]. It was envisaged that targeting the pre-emerginal stages can be achieved through introduction of the crude dried *T. vogelii* into the termite mound and animal burrow breeding and resting sites of the sand flies. Choice of pre-emerginal stages was because *T. vogelii* has been shown to deter adults from feeding [23].

**Materials and Methods**

Allopatric *Tephrosia vogelii* were collected from Kilifi County in Coast, Vihiga County in Western, and Karura in Nairobi provinces. Leaves were harvested and transported in paper bags to the laboratory where they were dried in a shade to a brittle state. The brittle leaves were ground to a fine powder using an electric mill and stored in glass bottles. The powder from the Nairobi plant was designated TVN, the Kilifi TVK and Vihiga TVV respectively.

**Preparation of chloral hydrate mount gum**

Chloral hydrate gum which is used to clear sand flies was prepared according to the method of [24]. Briefly, 8 grams of gum arabic, 70 grams of chloral hydrate crystals were weighed. These were dissolved in a mixture of 10 ml distilled water, 5 ml glycerine and 3 ml glacial acetic acid. This mixture was stirred using an electric magnetic stirrer for uniformity and then used to mount both eggs and various larval stages of the sand fly.

**Preparation of sand fly larvae food**

Larvae food is usually prepared by mixing rabbit droppings with rabbit chow, which actually dried corn meal from Unga Feeds. Equal proportions of the two are ground together, spread on a plastic tray, sprinkled with water and covered for ten days for a fungus to grow. The fungus is then harvested, and then dried in an oven [25].

**Toxicity assays**

Equal proportions (200 grams) of TVK, TVN and TVV powders and larvae food were separately mixed and used as food for three groups of the thirty (30) larvae. Another group of larvae was fed on a mixture of all the three *T. vogelii* (TVK, TVN and TVV) powders mixed with larva food. Another set of 30 larvae was fed on normal food at the same time to serve controls. Each day after the larvae were given the mixtures, they were examined for ingestion, mortility, and death using a dissecting microscope. An additional 3 larvae per group were suffocated using CO₂, mounted on slides using chloral hydrate mountant, left for 24 hours to clear and then examined using a light microscope for any changes internal changes. Live larvae were examined on a daily basis for any transformation to second, third, fourth in stars, pupae and adult emergence. Comparison was made between the time taken by the treated and the controls for the emergence of adult flies.

**Result and Discussion**

When fed on larvae food mixed with *T. vogelii*, they were able to digest it without any detrimental effect. A summary of the activities of the allopatric *T. vogelii* on the pre-emerginal species of the sand fly are given in the table 1.

The first instar larvae with two caudal bristles the third instar larvae with traces of *T. vogelii* in the fore gut, and with four caudal bristles are shown in Plate 1.

All larvae fed on extracts of *Tephrosia vogelii* from Nairobi County (TVN) exhibited 100% mortality. Results of this study showed that *T. vogelii* extracts from Kilifi (TVK) and Vihiga (TVV) are less potent as compared to the Nairobi plant. This could suggest that the Nairobi plant is a chemotype 1 that contains rotenoids whereas TVV and TVK are Chemotype 2 species that lack rotenoids [25]. The differences in activities of TVV, TVN and TVK could be as a result of allopatric introgression which is also known as has been reported in some plant species such as *Juniperus virginiana* (Pinales: Cupressaceae) [26]. Geographically separated plants of the same species usually exhibit introgressive hybridization, the movement of a gene (gene flow) from one species into the gene pool of another by repeated backcrossing of an interspecific hybrid with one of its parental species which changes chemical composition within the plant [26,27] (Plates 2,3).

Even though rotenone distribution varies in amount in most plants, leaves which were used usually contain the highest amount than in other plant parts as has been demonstrated by thin-layer densitometric analysis [27]. It has also been proven that the concentration of rotenone is high in leaves formed during the growing season and remains constant in a given leaf throughout its life on the plant [28]. Only leaves were used

| Stage          | Larvae food / insect activity s |
|----------------|---------------------------------|
|                | TVK                        | TVV                | TVN                     | TVV/TNV/TVV |
| 1st instar     | live, motile                | live, motile      | dead, coiled            | dead, coiled |
| 2nd instar     | live, motile                | live, motile      | dead, rotting           | dead, rotting |
| 3rd instar     | live, motile                | dead, fed         | disintegrating          | disintegrating |
| 4th instar     | live, pupation              | live, pupation    | disintegrating          | disintegrating |

**Table 1:** Sequence of activity of larvae food mixture together with different allopatric *T. vogelii*

**Plate 1:** First instar larva of *P. duboscqi* (A) and a third instar larva of *P. duboscqi* fed on *T. vogelii* powder (B) in their guts.

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In this study, the proven efficacy of crude T. vogelii extracts against sand fly larvae is a good indication that the plant can be readily used by the population at risk without necessarily purifying the active ingredients. Similar observations were made when crude M. sericea crude extracts from Coastal and Western Kenya regions were used against Culex quinquefasciatus (Diptera: Culicidae) eggs and larvae in the laboratory, semi-field and field conditions in Kibera slums of Nairobi County, Kenya. Unlike T. vogelii, Mundulea sericea extracts known to contain rotenoids from two allopatric regions were toxic to both eggs and larvae but at different concentrations, with the east species being more toxic than the western one [36]. The study recommended the adoption of M. sericea crude extract as a biological larvicide and ovicide to control Cx. quinquefasciatus. For the control of sand flies in the field, application of crude dried T. vogelii powder into termite mounds and animal burrows can be a cost-effective method of sand fly control.

**Conclusion**

Semi-field and field studies need to be done in order to determine how to use T. vogelii toxic chemotype in the control of sand fly vectors of the leishmaniases in Kenya.

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