First report of *Basella rugose mosaic virus* infecting *Basella alba* in Nigeria

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Malabar spinach (*Basella alba*) is a popular potherb in Nigeria, grown in commercial farms and around household gardens. In 2018, virus-like symptoms such as leaf malformation and mild mosaic were observed on *B. alba* plants in a backyard garden in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. Six symptomatic leaf samples were obtained from three plants and three of them tested positive in DAS-ELISA to monoclonal antibodies (Agdia Inc., Elkhart, USA) specific to potyviruses. Total nucleic were extracted from infected plants using the cetyl trimethyl ammonium bromide method and RT-PCR was performed using degenerate primers PotyCP (5'-TGGTGYATGANAAAYGGNACNT-3') and Oligo-dT-poty-R (5'-CCCAGTCACGACTTTTTTTTTTTT-3') (Sudheera et al. 2014) to amplify a partial coat protein (CP) gene and the 3' end untranslated region of the potyvirus genomic RNA. Products of approximately 800 bp were amplified and an amplicon from a sample, Dg-Ke, was bi-directionally sequenced. The poly(A) tail was trimmed from the sequence and deposited in GenBank under accession number MN996303. Nucleotide and amino acid sequence analysis of the partial CP gene showed 96.1% and 97.9% identities, respectively, with an isolate of *Basella rugose mosaic virus* (BaRMV-BR; DQ821939) infecting *B. rubra* in Taiwan

(Huang and Chang 2006). To our knowledge, this is the first report of a potyvirus infecting *B. alba* in Nigeria. Although a cucumber mosaic virus isolate has recently been reported from *B. alba* in Nigeria (Adediji 2019), the presence of BaRMV suggests that the plant is a host to multiple viruses.

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