

## **Ethnomedicinal Plants of Sirumalai Hills of Dindigul District, Tamilnadu, India**

**<sup>1</sup>C. Alagesaboopathi and <sup>2</sup>K. Rajendran**

<sup>1</sup>Department of Botany, Government Arts College (Autonomous),  
Salem - 636 007. Tamilnadu, India

<sup>2</sup>P.G. and Research Department of Botany,  
Thiagarajar College, Madurai - 625 009. Tamilnadu, India

Email : [alagesaboopathi@yahoo.com](mailto:alagesaboopathi@yahoo.com)

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### **Abstract**

The present investigation is an attempt to an ethnomedicinal plants survey was carried out in Sirumalai Hills, Dindigul district, Tamilnadu, for the exploration of various ailments herbal remedies. They routine use 40 medicinal plants for the treatment of several disease either in single or in combination with some other ingredients. The information on correct botanical identities with family, local name and traditional practice of 40 plant species belonging of 27 families are discussed here for the treatment of various illnesses.

### **Introduction**

Plants have been used in traditional medicine for several thousand years (Abu-Rabia, 2005). The knowledge of medicinal plants has been accumulated in the course of many centuries based on different medicinal systems such as Ayurveda, Unani and Siddha. In India it is reported that traditional healers use 2500 plant species and 100 species of plants serve as regular sources of medicine (Pei, 2001). Medicinal plants are the basic health care of rural households form the resource base for rapidly growing pharmaceutical industry and cosmetic. The ancient civilization including China, Egypt and Indus Valley the utilization of medicinal plants by them (Kirtikar and Basu 1935). In recent years,

there has been a tremendous range of interest in the interest in the medicinal plants especially those used in Ayurvedas and other traditional systems of medicines. Drugs obtained from plant are believed to be much safer and exhibit a remarkable efficacy in the treatment of various ailments. (Siddique et. al., 1995). The folk medicinal traditions play a reflecting and prominent role in human and environment interaction. (Chopra et.al.,1956). Sirumalai Hills are situated in 10°00' and 10°30' N latitude and 77°33' and 78°15' E longitude of Dindigul district in Tamilnadu. The altitude ranges from 400 to 1,600 msl. The present investigation focuses was performed with the aim of producing an inventory of the plants used by traditional healers in Sirumalai Hills of Tamilnadu to treat various ailments.

### **Materials and Methods**

Periodic field surveys were carried out in Sirumalai Hills of Tamilnadu during June 2007 to January 2008. Data were collected through tribal people (Paliyar), local vaidyas, village elders and native medicine men of the Sirumalai Hills through personal communication while collecting such ethno medicinal information. Each of the plant material was assigned a field note books and documented as to Binomials with family, local name, part used and therapeutic uses, plant parts that were identified as having use in ethnobotany were collected, compressed, the voucher specimens were collected and identified by referring to standard flora (Hooker, 1884; Gamble 1936; Henry et al., 1987; Matthew, 1983). All the voucher specimens were maintained in the herbarium at Thiagrajar College (Autonomous), Madurai (India). It was found that some of the present information has not so far been available in literature.

### **Results and Discussion**

In the present investigation 40 medicinal plants are used for the treatment of various diseases like asthma, piles, diabetes, snake bite, skin disease, ulcer, stomach pain, cough, headache, anemia, edima, rheumatism, purgative, dysentery, leprosy, laxative, astringent, urinary disorders, paralysis, scabies, diarrhoea and diuretic etc. Some of them are used as anthelmintic, fever and antiseptic also. 40 plants species belonging to 27 families are reported. The utility lies through their roots, bark, latex,

leaves, fruits and seeds. These are taken internally or applied externally in the form of infusion, decoction, paste or powder. Most of the plants used in medicines are either mixed with other ingredients or single. Medicinal plants studied are enumerated arranged alphabetically with their botanical name followed by families name, local name, parts used and ethnomedicinal uses. Some important medicinal plants needs immediate conservation and their cultivation should be encouraged through which their extinction can be prevented and local village people may also get low-cost cure their disease.

## **Enumeration**

1. *Abutilon indicum* (L.) Sweet. (Malvaceae), Local Name : Thuthi. Person with mouth full of munched leaf blows air into the ears of a person affected with breathlessness for relief from it.
2. *Achyranthus aspera* L. (Amaranthaceae), Local Name: Nayuruvi. Brushing the teeth with the root relieves toothache. Leaf paste is used for piles.
3. *Adhatoda vasica* Nees. (Acanthaceae), Local Name: Adathoda. Leaf extract is taken internally to relieve cough and cure asthma.
4. *Alpinia galanga* Sw. (Zingiberaceae), Local Name: Peraraththai. Slightly burnt rhizome is powdered and small quantity powder mixed with honey and the mixture is administered for stomach upset and digestion in children.
5. *Andrographis echiioides* Nees. (Acanthaceae), Local Name: Gopuramthangi. Leaf juice is very bitter to taste and administered for its anthelmintic activity. Leaf powder consumed along with rice water for snake bite and for eczema.
6. *Andrographis paniculata* Nees. (Acanthaceae), Local Name: Chiriyangai. Paste form of entire plant is applied externally for skin disease.
7. *Anisomeles malabarica*. R. Br. (Lamiaceae), Local Name: Peythumbai. Leaf of this plant along with the leaf of *Alangium salvifolium* is made into a paste and applied to cure chronic wounds.
8. *Argemone mexicana* L. (Papaveraceae), Local Name: Brahmamandu. Yellow latex applied to cure ulcer on the lips.

9. *Aristolochia bracteolata* L. (Aristolochiaceae), Local Name: Aduthinnapalai. Leaf paste applied on the head while bath relieves dandruff and other infections.
10. *Aristolochia indica* L. (Aristolochiaceae), Local Name: Eswara mooligai. Leaf paste is used for eczema. Leaf decoction relieves stomach pain during menses.
11. *Astracantha longifolia* Nees. (Acanthaceae), local Name: Neermulli. The decoction of leaves and curry is made out of leaves are taken to stomach in the case of anemia and edema.
12. *Calophyllum inophyllum* L. (Clusiaceae), Local Name: Punni, Seed oil applied externally in rheumatism and skin affections. A decoction of it employed for indolent ulcers. Bark juice used as a purgative.
13. *Calotropis gigantea* R.Br. (Asclepiadaceae), Local Name: Erukku, Milky latex is applied on the wounds on the legs of livestock.
14. *Cassia fistula* L. (Caesalpinaceae), Local Name: Sarakkonnai. The decoction of the bark is mixed with garlic and powdered pepper and later on given to cattle as purgative.
15. *Cissus quadrangularis* L. (Vitaceae), Local Name: Pirandai. Young tops cooked and eaten for dysentery. Paste of the leaves and chilly mixed with salt and administered for appetite in livestock.
16. *Cocculus hirsutus* L. (Menispermaceae), Local Name: Kattukkodi. Leaf Juice is used as a refrigerant and also applied to eczema. Roots are used for rheumatism and stomachache in children.
17. *Commelina benghalensis* L. (Commelinaceae), Local Name: Kanavazhi. Mucilaginous and starchy rhizomes are cooked and eaten Juice of leaves used in emollient and leprosy.
18. *Crataeva religiosa* Forst. (Capparidaceae), Local Name: Maralingam. Bark stimulates liver, its extract used as laxative promoting appetite and other urinary affections. Flowers are astringent.
19. *Datura metel* L. (Solanaceae), Local Name: Karuomathai. Petals are shade dried and broken into pieces and an instant beedi is prepared and smoked for asthma. Leaf juice and coconut oil mixture in the ratio of 2:1 respectively applied for wound healing.
20. *Eclipta prostrata* (L.) Mant. (Asteraceae), Local Name: Karichalankanni, Leaves boiled in

coconut oil and applied to relieve dandruff and for blackening gray hair.

21. *Erythrina indica* Lam. (Fabaceae), Local Name: Kalyanamurungai. The paste of the leaves is applied on the wounds of the cattle for healing.

22. *Ficus glomerata* Roxb. (Moraceae), Local Name: Athi. Leaves used in bilious affections. Root used in diarrhoea and diabetes. Bark is given to cattle in render-pest disease and decoction is used as a vulnerary.

23. *Glycyrrhiza glabra* L. (Fabaceae), Local Name: Athimathuram. Roots when chewed relieve throat pain. Leaf juice applied for cracks on the lips.

24. *Gyumenma sylvestre* (Retz.) R.Br ex Schultes (Asclepiadaceae), Local Name: Sirukurinchan. Extract of leaves taken orally along with milk used in diabetes.

25. *Hemidesmus indicus* L. (Asclepiadaceae), Local Name: Nannari. The root powder is mixed with sugar water and taken internally as a cooling beverage.

26. *Hybanthes enneaspermus* (L.) F. Muell. (Violaceae), Local Name: Orithalthamarai. Root is used in urinary disorders. Leaves used for bowel complaints.

27. *Jatropha curcus* L. (Eupobiaceae), Local Name: Kattamanakku. It is used to paralysis and externally for skin troubles and rheumatism. Leaf juice taken orally along with goat milk used in scabies and ringworm.

28. *Morinda tinctoria* Roxb. (Rubiaceae), Local Name: Manjanatti. Leaves are taken in a cluster and cut is made just above the petiole and discarded. The remaining leaves are boiled and a decoction is prepared and administered for stomach pain and dysentery in children.

29. *Opuntia dillenii* Haw. (Cactaceae), Local Name: Sappathikalli, Fruits edible used in whooping cough. Pulp also applied in ophthalmia and control spasmodic cough and expectoration.

30. *Oxalis cormiculata* L. (Oxalidaceae), Local Name: Puliyarai. Fresh juice of plant given in piles and anemia. Leaf juice is given to coneract *Datura* poisoning.

31. *Papver somniferum* L. (Papaveraceae), Local Name: Kasakasa. Poppy seed oil used in culinary

purposes, free from narcotic action and also used in diarrhoea and dysentery. Extract used for irritating cough.

32. *Phyllanthus emblica* L. (Euphorbiaceae), Local Name: Nelli. Fruits used in cooling, diuretic and laxative.

33. *Plumbago zeylanica* Lam. (Plumbaginaceae), Local Name: Chithramoolam. Dried, powdered root mixed with goat milk administered to arrest frequent urination.

34. *Sesbania aegytiaca* Pers. (Fabaceae), Local Name: Chithagathi. Leaf decoction used in diarrhoea, itches and skin eruptions.

35. *Sesbania grandiflora* Pers. (Fabaceae), Local Name: Agaththi. Leaf decoction to eliminate worms and cures in the stomach.

36. *Solanum torvum* Swartz. (Solanaceae), Local Name: Sundai. Unripened fruit is cooked and taken internally to eradicate intestinal worms.

37. *Streblus asper* Lour. (Moraceae), Local Name: Piraayanmaram. Leaves is used in swelling and ulcers. Latex is used as antiseptic. Seed paste is used externally in leucoderma.

38. *Vernonia cinerea* Less. (Asteraceae), Local Name: Sahadevishanglamir. Herbs used against malaria. Roots used as an anthelmintic, their decoction given in diarrhoea and stomachache. Leaf juice is used in fever, cough and rheumatism.

39. *Vitex negundo* L. (Verbenaceae), Local Name: Nochi. Leavs boiled and the vapour is inhaled to relieve cough, cold body pair and headache.

40. *Withania somnifera* Dunal. (Solanaceae), Local Name: Asvakantha. Root paste is applied externally for inflammatory conditions ulcers and scabies.

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