

NOTES

A PRELIMINARY SURVEY OF TRADITIONAL MEDICINAL PLANTS IN THE WEST COAST AND INTERIOR OF SABAH

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The uses of traditional medicinal plants in relieving symptoms of disease and curing various infections date back many centuries. In recent years, considerable interest has developed in Asian countries in the collection and extended use of indigenous and introduced plants for medicinal purposes (Guntavid 1992, Kulip 1996). Knowledge of medicinal plants has been the key for the survival of the ethnic groups who live in the interior. Peoples who live far from towns and in forests still rely on traditional cures handed down to them through the generations. They use these plants in one form or another to cure or alleviate a variety of ills, for example, toothache, stomach-ache and malaria.

This report describes a number of plants still being used for medicinal purposes in various districts of Sabah, especially where the people cannot avail themselves to hospital facilities. It was prepared to meet the growing need to learn about local medicinal plants in Sabah, and also to provide an ethnobotanical basis for chemical and pharmacological studies. To gather information, a botanist interacted directly with the villagers experienced in the preparation and administration of various plant remedies. The survey was conducted in various districts in the west coast and interior parts of Sabah, namely Kota Marudu, Pitas, Ranau, Kuala Penyu, Papar, Tambunan, Penampang, Tenom, Sipitang, Sook and Pinangah. Thirteen villages in eight districts and three sub-districts were involved.

Specimens of plants, known for their cures of specific illnesses, were collected and recorded by their local names. Voucher herbarium specimens were identified and lodged at the State Forestry Herbarium in Sandakan.

Table 1. Ethnobotanical applications of Sabah medicinal plants

Medical use	Botanical name	Tribal name	Part used
Antidote	<i>Aralia montana</i> (Araliaceae)	Golungang (Kd)	Young leaves
	<i>Bambusa vulgaris</i> (Bambusaideae)	Tamahang (Kd)	Outer bark powder
	<i>Barringtonia</i> sp. (Lecytidaceae)	Tampalang (Kd)	Inner bark
Antihelminthic	<i>Coix lachryma-jobi</i> (Gramineae)	Tigiu (Kd)	Root
	<i>Paedaria verticellata</i> (Rubiaceae)	Taud (Kd)	Any part
Antimalarial	Menispermaceae	Babas (L)	Sap
	<i>Alstonia angustiloba</i> (Apocynaceae)	Tombirong (Kd)	Latex
	<i>Brucea javanica</i> (Simaroubaceae)	Monomopuru (Kd)	Ripe fruit
	<i>Panicum palmifolium</i> (Gramineae)	Tandaki (Kd)	Young leaves
Alopecia	Euphorbiaceae	Taagong (L)	Leaves
Asthma	<i>Costus</i> sp.	Silok (L)	Sap
	Costaceae	Tongkur-ongkur (Kd)	Young shoot
	<i>Drynaria sparisona</i> (Polypodiaceae)	Tapako (Kd)	Rhizome

continued

Table 1 (continued)

	<i>Cassia</i> sp. (Leguminosae)	Wollu (Kd)	Stem
	<i>Merremia gracilis</i> (Convolvulaceae)	Malagatas (Kd)	Sap
Beri-beri	<i>Ampelocissus imperiales</i> (Vitaceae)	Tabai (Kd)	Young leaves
	<i>Cassia alata</i> (Leguminosae)	Kayabau (K)	Root
	<i>Cinnamomum</i> sp. (Lauraceae)	Makalabau (Kd)	Young leaves
	<i>Ellingera punicza</i> (Zingiberaceae)	Tuhau (Kd)	Young shoot
Burnt skin	<i>Lycopodium</i> sp. (Lycopodiaceae)	Pogou (Kd)	Stem, twig & leaves
Chest complaint	<i>Dillenia excelsa</i> (Dilleniaceae)	Doingin (Kd)	Sap
	<i>Fagraea racemosa</i> (Loganiaceae)	Todopon puok (Kd)	Root
Colic	<i>Fissistigma latifolium</i> (Annonaceae)	Sumbun (Kd)	Sap
	<i>Flacourtia rukam</i> (Flacourtiaceae)	Peripot (Kd)	Root
Cough	<i>Ellipanthus tomentosus</i> (Compositae)	Bidon (Kd)	Root
	<i>Ficus</i> sp. (Moraceae)	Tongkungkop (Kd)	Sap from the root
	<i>Rinorea</i> sp. (Violaceae)	Posiou (Kd)	Fruit leaves
	<i>Centella asiatica</i> (Umbiliferae)	Salapid (Kd)	Smoke to be inhale
	<i>Coix lachryma-jobi</i> (Gramineae)	Dalai (Kd)	Young stem
	<i>Justicia gendarussa</i> (Acanthaceae)	Tolonsi (Kd)	Young leaves
Diabetes	<i>Plantago major</i> (Plantaginaceae)	Bunga (L)	Whole plant
Eczema	Menispermaceae	Babas (L)	Leaves
Febrifuge	<i>Cucurbita</i> sp. (Cucurbitaceae)	Timun belanda (L)	Fruit
Gastritis	Compositae	Udu amek (L)	Root
Germicide	<i>Mallotus macrostachys</i> (Euphorbiaceae)	Dahu (Kd)	Root
Headache	<i>Justicia gendarussa</i> (Acanthaceae)	Sikapapar (Kd)	Leaves
	<i>Flacourtia</i> sp. (Flacourtiaceae)	Peropot (Kd)	Leaves
Hemophilic	<i>Hanguana</i> sp. (Hanguanaceae)	Tambaka (Kd)	Whole plant
	<i>Intsia palembanica</i> (Leguminosae)	Tupin (Kd)	Leaves
Influenza	<i>Amydrium medium</i> (Araceae)	Kulimpiau (Kd)	Entire plant
	<i>Brucea javanica</i> (Simaraoubaceae)	Kuinin (Kd)	Fruit
	<i>Coix lachryma-jobi</i> (Gramineae)	Dalai (Kd)	Root or young leaves
	<i>Costus</i> sp. (Costaceae)	Sidbu-sidbu (Kd)	Young shoot
Insect repellent	<i>Acorus calamus</i> (Araceae)	Guo sanit (R)	Rhizome
		Komburongoh (Kd)	
Intensive cleanser/Wound	<i>Plantago major</i> (Plantaginaceae)	Bunga (L)	Whole plant
	Liliaceae	Bawang sia (L)	Seed
Jaundice	<i>Fibrurea tinctoria</i> (Menispermaceae)	Tonsisilou or Takop (Kd)	Stem
Measles	<i>Alocasia</i> sp. (Araceae)	Tanom (Kd)	Stem
	<i>Croton</i> sp. (Euphorbiaceae)	Kalayon (Kd)	Root
Myorelaxant	<i>Hanguana malayana</i> (Hanguanaceae)	Nalu kapar (Kd)	Leaves

continued

Table 1 (continued)

Pancreatitis	<i>Alphitonia incana</i> (Rhamnaceae)	Pukudita (Kd)	Leaves
	<i>Blumea balsamifera</i> (Compositae)	Tawawo (Kd)	Leaves
	<i>Merremia gracilis</i> (Convolvulaceae)	Gatas-gatas (Kd)	Sap
	<i>Tetrastigma</i> sp. (Vitaceae)	Lipoi (Kd)	Sap
	<i>Homalanthus</i> sp. (Euphorbiaceae)	Tombubuto (Kd)	Stem
	<i>Hoya coronaria</i> (Asclepidaceae)	Wida (Kd)	Young leaves
Rheumatism	<i>Homalanthus populneus</i> (Euphorbiaceae)	Dolimato (Kd)	Young leaves
	<i>Uvaria</i> sp. (Annonaceae)	Langad-langad (Kd)	Whole plant
Ring worm	<i>Cassia alata</i> (Leguminosae)	Manggarut (Kd)	Leaves
Shivering	<i>Ficus elliptica</i> (Moraceae)	Hintotobu (Kd)	Root
Skin cancer	Liliaceae	Bawang sia (L)	Leaves
Sprain	<i>Abutilon indicum</i> (Malvaceae)	Tindokot or Tondorupang (Kd)	Root and leaves
Stomach-ache	<i>Barringtonia</i> sp. (Lecythidaceae)	Tampalang (Kd)	Bark
	<i>Brucea javanica</i> (Simaroubaceae)	Magapas or Tinimug di ikus(Kd)	Ripe fruit
	<i>Eurycoma longifolia</i> (Simaroubaceae)	Tombuid or Monompuru (Kd)	Root or leaves
	<i>Sida acuta</i> (Malvaceae)	Bulitotok (Kd)	Whole plant
	<i>Costus speciosus</i> (Costaceae)	Linsabu (MT)	Young stem
	<i>Mallotus</i> sp. (Euphorbiaceae)	Dahu (Kd)	Bark
	<i>Fimbraria chloroleuca</i> (Menispermaceae)	Tapa buawang (Kd)	Stem
Styptic	<i>Dillenia</i> sp. (Dilleniaceae)	Rungin (R)	Root
	<i>Dinochloa</i> sp. (Gramineae)	Wadan (Kd)	Young shoot
	<i>Gomphostemma</i> sp. (Labiatae)	Bunga susun (M)	Leaves
	<i>Mallotus</i> sp. (Euphorbiaceae)	Dahu (R)	Bark
	<i>Paeletia</i> sp. (Rubiaceae)	Ubat damat (M)	Leaves
Swelling body	<i>Dillenia excelsa</i> (Dilleniaceae)	Pampan (R)	Young leaves
	<i>Hoya coronaria</i> (Asclepidaceae)	Lunau-lunau (Kd)	Leaves
	<i>Phyllanthus</i> sp. (Euphorbiaceae)	Mongkolongkoi (R)	Twig and leaves
	<i>Stemochlaena palustris</i> (Blechnaceae)	Lomiding (Kd)	Leaves and frond
Tonic	<i>Agelaea macrophylla</i> (Connaraceae)	Kalam-malam (M)	Root
	<i>Averrhoa bilimbi</i> (Oxalidaceae)	Tulod-ulod (Kd)	Root
	<i>Croton</i> sp. (Euphorbiaceae)	Rolak tarangang (R)	Bark
	<i>Cymbopogon citratus</i> (Gramineae)	Capai-pimping (M)	Root
	<i>Dalbergia parvifolia</i> (Leguminosae)	Tampam kalabau (Kd)	Bark
	<i>Dichapetalum</i> sp. (Dichapetalaceae)	Akar urat (M)	Leaves
	<i>Dioscorea</i> sp. (Dioscoreaceae)	Kolonton aiso due (Kd)	Rhizome
	<i>Fissistigma manubriatum</i> (Annonaceae)	Gagon(Kd)	Root
	<i>Garlenia</i> sp. (Rubiaceae)	Marabingo (Kd)	Root
	<i>Allizia</i> sp. (Leguminosae)	Sapang (Kd)	Root or stem
	<i>Gnetum macrostachyum</i> (Gnetaceae)	Kokos (Kd)	Stem
	<i>Octomeles sumatrana</i> (Datiscaceae)	Tiniwaung (Kd)	Bark
	<i>Uvaria sorsogomensis</i> (Annonaceae)	Sogombong(Kd)	Root
	<i>Metroxylon sago</i> (Palmae)	Rumbio (Kd)	Young shoot
	Loranthaceae	Surni sohod (Kd)	Root

continued

Table 1 (continued)

Womb cleanser	<i>Desmodium heterocarpus</i> (Leguminosae) <i>Ficus septica</i> (Moraceae)	Mampan sokot (Kd) Hintotobow (Kd)	Whole plant Root
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K = Kimarangang;
M = Malay;

Kd = Kadazandusun;
MT = Murut Timugan;

L = Lundayeh;
R = Rungus.

Table 1 gives some information on 95 plant species used to treat 34 ailments. Plant species may be used by various tribes for a range of medicinal purposes. For example, *Costus speciosus* is used to treat fever by the Kadazandusun tribe but the Murut Timugan tribe use it for stomach-ache. The chief source of medicinal plants in Sabah has been plants growing wild in the primary or secondary forest districts. Some commonly used plants are planted around houses. Treatments vary from a single plant to, usually, mixtures of up to ten species. This study reveals that there are more than 100 species used as medicinal plants in the areas visited. The application of endemic flora as a traditional medicinal cure plays an important role in the primary health care of village people in Sabah today. It also highlights the fact that forest plants have several uses other than just for timber.

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