INHERENT MEDICINAL USES OF PLANTS.

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ABSTRACT

Plants have been used for medicinal purposes long before recorded history, for example, ancient Chinese and Egyptian papyrus writings describe medicinal plant uses. Indigenous cultures such as India, used herbs in their healing rituals and also developed traditional medical systems such as Ayurveda. Others also developed Traditional Chinese Medicine in which herbal therapies were used systematically. HERBAL medicine, also called botanical medicine or phytotherapy refers to the use of plant seeds, berries, roots, leaves, bark or flowers for medicinal purposes. It is the oldest and most widely used system of medicine in the world today. It is used in all societies and is common to all cultures.

Key word: Plants, Medicine, Ayurveda.

INTRODUCTION

It is estimated that there are about 250,000-5000,500 species of plants on earth (Borris, 1996) of which a relatively small percentage (1-10 percent) of these are used for food by humans and animals. Medicinal plants contain numerous biologically active compounds such as carbohydrates, proteins, enzymes, fats and oils, minerals, vitamins, terpenoids flavonoids, carotenoids, sterols, simple phenolic glycosides, tannins, saponins, polyphenols, to mention few which have medicinal activities.

Uses

Tulsi (Ocimum sanctum) Tulasi, Indian Basil has been used for thousands of years in the traditional medicine of India, Ayurveda is known to Hindus as Tulsi.

Zingiber Officinale Luoyang Dilaw, perennial monocot reed. Ginger combines well with many herbs improving taste and potency. Ginger speeds up the delivery of healthy plant chemicals into the blood stream while adding a spicy, hot zest to your favorite dishes.

Lomphora Myroha tree. One of the three gifts of the three magi. Myrrh was used in religious rituals in ancient Egypt, myrrh antifungal, antiseptic and sastringent help treatment of infections.

Ginseng

Ginseng is found in eastern hardwoof forests and takes a minimum of five years to reach maturity. The plant features pointed green leaves, light green flowers, and red berries. Ginseng is the most widely used medicinal plant in the world, largely because it is great for stimulating the immune system and increasing energy levels. It's also been shown to lower blood sugar and cholesterol levels.

Echinacea

Echinacea plants are typically found in prairies due to their resistance to drought. They have a coneflower shape, with a large bulb pointing upwards and small, purplish petal pointing down. Echinacea is widely used for helping to strengthen the immune system. The plant also has a history of effective use for treating sores, burns, wounds, bites, and stings.

Bloodroot

This plant, which is sometimes referred to as redroot, is ground in eastern woodlands. It is often found near mayapple or Solomon's Seal. Bloodroot has rounded green leaves and flowers with tiny white petals. However, it is the root part of the plant that is used for medicinal purposes. For many years, bloodroot has been used as an ingredient in mouthwashes and kinds of toothpaste due to its ability to reduce plaque and help prevent gingivitis. Also, research is currently being conducted to see if bloodroot can be used to treat cancer. It has also been used in the past to reduce the size of tumors.

Milk Thistle

Most often found in Mediterranean climates, milk thistle is composed of a tall stem with a dense flower filled with tiny purplish petals. This plant is most commonly used for the treatment of the liver. It is often used for treating liver or gall bladder disease, cirrhosis, and hepatitis and may help protect the liver from damage due to alcoholism. The plant has also been used to help treat depression.

Sage

Sage is a unique plant in that it can grow in places with very little soil, such as stony areas or dry banks. The plant is a shrub with long, thin green leaves and delicate purple flowers. Sage has been used for centuries as a remedy for digestive issues. Also, it's been useful for healing sore throats, gum infections, and ulcers and helping to prevent excessive salivation and profuse perspiration.

Witch Hazel

This versatile shrub can grow in moist or dry areas and it comprised of oval green leaves and flowers with thin petals than are dark yellow, orange or red. Witch hazel is used in many astringents and topical skin care products, including those used to treat varicose veins, hemorrhoids, inflammation, wounds, and bruises. It has also been used in eye drops and to treat other eye problems. Witch hazel bark is used internally for treating diarrhea, colitis, and dysentery.

Chamomile

Often found in pastures, chamomile has a long, thin stem and a tiny flower that resembles a daisy. This plant is often used in teas and other herbal remedies to treat problems of the digestive system, bronchitis, cough or fever. Also, chamomile was sometimes used in topical products for the treatment of toothaches, earaches, and inflammation.

Aloe Vera

The aloe vera plant is often found near water in sand or rocks. It has thick, stiff leaves and slender, orange-colored flower spikes. The gel found in the leaves is commonly used to speed the healing of skin conditions, including burns and wounds. The sap found in the base of the leaf is used as a digestive stimulant and a strong laxative.

Tea Tree

This shrub is found in swamps and contains tiny green leaves and wispy
white flowers. The essential oils taken from this plant are a popular antiseptic used for stings, burns, wounds and many other skin conditions. Tea trees are also utilized for stimulating the immune system and for helping to treat chronic fatigue syndrome.

**Slippery Elm**

This plant, which is found both in rich soils and on rocky hillsides, has oval leaves and small clusters of reddish flowers. Slippery elm is used to soothe mucus membranes found in the chest, stomach, intestines and urinary tubules. It’s sometimes used as a treatment for conditions like stomach ulcers, indigestion, and sore throat.

Keep in mind that it’s always wise to seek the advice of a doctor before using medicinal plants to treat any condition. In some cases, excessive doses of a medicinal plant can be toxic. [3]

**Rosemary**

Rosemary is the great reviver. This perennial woody herb stimulates energy and optimism and sharpens memory and concentration by bringing more oxygen to your brain, according to UMMC. It’s a wonderfully stimulating alternative to caffeine when you need that second wind!

A row of these long-lived and drought-tolerant plants makes a beautiful, bee-friendly, evergreen hedge. You may only need one plant in your garden, as a little bit goes a long way.

**German Chamomile**

Delicate, apple-scented chamomile demonstrates that mildness does not mean ineffectiveness. Primarily grown for its small, yellow-bellied flowers, NCCAM reports that chamomile is one of the best children’s herbs for treating colic, nervous stress, infections, and stomach disorders. [3]

**Fenugreek, Methi**

Fenugreek seeds are nourishing and taken to encourage weight gain (take note, anorexics) inhibit cancer of the liver lower blood cholesterol levels and improve digestive tract spasms, muscle cramps, stomachache and others. The Fenugreek inhibits bacteria and yeast growth. [beneficial for nervous and stress-related conditions.]

**Vitex Negundo**

Commonly known as the five-leaved chaste tree, is a large aromatic shrub with quadrangular, densely whitish, tomentose branchlets. Key therapeutic benefits: Because of its anti-inflammatory, antibacterial and antifungal properties, the plant is useful in treating sores and skin infections. Five-Leaved Chaste Tree relieves muscle aches and joint pains. The herb is effective in treating vaginal discharge.

**Echinacea**

One of the world’s most important medicinal herbs, the echinacea has the capacity to raise the body’s resistance to bacterial and viral infections by stimulating the immune system. It also has antibiotic properties that help relieve allergies. TheBasically, the root is beneficial in the treatment of sores, wounds, and burns. It was once used by the Native Americans as an application for insect bites, stings, and snakebites. The echinacea grows on any well-drained soil, as long as it gets sunlight. [7]

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