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SOME RARE HOMOEOPATHIC MEDICINAL PLANTS OF SOUTH INDIA

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ABSTRACT: *This present study describes 11 species under 11 generate and 10 families of rare Homoeopathic Medicinal Plants introduced and cultivated in the Nilgiri district, Tamil Nadu, South India. The original citation, description, distribution and their medicinal uses are given.*

INTRODUCTION

The origin of Homoeopathic system of medicine dates from as early as in 1813 AD in Germany. In India, Homoeopathy as a system of medicine was introduced first by the British in West Bengal (Bhandari, 1986). Ever since its introduction in India, it has gained good importance and enjoyed patronage by local traditional paractioners. It is note-worthy to mention here that most of the Homoeopathic medicinal plants are ubiquitously found in hill stations like Nilgiri and Kodaikanal of South India.

Nilgiri district with its wide range of agroclimatic conditions forms a cradle land for the cultivation and maintenance of several medicinal plants. This district is well known for its rich flora and medicinal and economic significance. It is needless to mention here that ca. the district constitute 60% of Homoeopathic medicinal plants in India.

The Nilgiri district is one of the smallest districts of Tamil Nadu popularly known as the Blue Mountains. It lies between 11^0, 12' and 11^0, 43'N and 76^0,14' and 77^0,1'E. The general topography of the area consists of undulating hills and elevated land, the elevation ranging from 400 – 2,623m. The elevated region has a tropical climate, with the high altitude contributing to the low temperature. The monsoon weather, South-west and North-east, both contribute to the annual rain fall ranging from 1312 mm. The temperature varies from a minimum of 0^0C to maximum of 30^0C, the hottest part of the user from March to May.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The materials for the present study forms a collection of plants from different seasons at various places from Nilgiri district, Tamil Nadu, South India during 1984-1992. The present collection is confined to the plants which were introduced by the British and rarely cultivated else where as a garden ornament except in the hill stations like Nilgiris and Kodaikanal, Tamil Nadu, South India. These plants were identified and confirmed with the authentic herbarium housed in (MH) Botanical Survey of India (Southern circle), Coimbatore and deposited in the herbarium run by the Survey of Medicinal Plants and Collection Unit, Udhagamandalam.

The plants are arranged in alphabetical order under each species in their correct names their synonyms if any, short description, distribution and medicinal values of plants and the other associated information are given according to the documented. Homoeopathic sources (Allen, 1982; Clarke, 1982 and Boericke 1984).

Asparagus offinalis L., Sp. Pl. 313. 1753; Anonymous, Wealth of India 1: 132. 1948; Cooke, Fl. Bombay 3:271.1958 (repr.ed); Umrao Singh et al., Diet. Econ. Pl. Indian 24. 1983 (repr. Ed.); Rajan in J.Econ. Tax. Bot. 10: 456. 1992. (LILIACEAE).

Common name : *"Garden Asparagus"*, *"Sparrowgrass"*.

Errect, woody, much-branched, glabrous sub-shrub about 2m. high. Leaves scale-like, cladodes terete, thread-like, 3-8 in fascicle 2.5 cm. long. Flowers greenish-yellow 1-4 in axis with cladodes, perianth campanulate, 6 lobes in two rows, stamens 6, attached on the base of the perianth, anthers yellow, stigma 3-lobed. Fruits immature green, globose, when mature red, seeds single globos.

Fl & Fr. : Throughout the year.

Specimen examined : Government Botanical Garden, Udhagamandalam, 6.1.1986, Rajan 1062 (Flowering); and 28.9.1990, 3706 (Flowering & Fruiting).

Distribution:

A native of Europe and W. Asia in India cultivated as garden ornament.

Uses : It causes weakness and cardiac depression with dropsy. Rheumatic pains. Especially about left shoulder and heart (Boercike, 1984).

Bellis Perennis L., Sp. Pl. 886. 1753; Umrao Singh *et al.,* Diet. Econ. Pl. India 29, 1983 (repr. Ed.) ; Dawre *et al*., Check List Homoeopathic Med. Pl. India 17. 1987 *(ASTERACEAE)*.

Common name : *"Daisy"*

A perennial herb 15 cm high. Leaves clustered at the base, obovate – spathulate, 14 x 14 cm. Slightly toothed at margins. Flowers in heads, solitary, white or pinkish-white; penduncles up to 21 cm. Long Pubesent; ray florets 5 seriate; disc yellow; achens white, 3 cm. broad, flattened. Fruit not seen.

Fl : April – May and September – November 22.11.1985, Raja 1051 (Flowering).

Distribution : Native to W. Europe ; introduced in India and cultivated in gardens of Nilgiris.

Uses : Headache, Indigestion, Rheumatism, Pregnancy complaints, Sleeplessness, Spleen affection (Clarke, 1982).

Datura sanguinea Ruiz & Pavon, Fl. Per. @:15. 1799; Gamble, Fl. Madras 2: 941. 1924; Deb in J. Econ. Tax. Bot. 1:38. 1980; Chitra in Henry et al., Fl. Tamil Nadu 2:113. 1987 (SOLANCEAE).

Common Name : *"Thornapple"*

Shrub or small tree 3 – 4 m. high. Leaves alternate, clustered, 5 – 7 from the same point, ovate – lanceolate, acuminate at apex ca. 12 * 7 cm., densely pubescent on both sides, shining, green above, paler beneath, petiole ca. 7 cm. long. Flowers pendulous, terminal, orange-red, 20 cm. long, stamens 5. Fruit not seen.

Fl : April – May and September – November.

Specimen examined : Coonoor road, Udhagamandalm, 20.7.1984, Dawre 394 (Flowering), Doddabetta, 15.10.1986, Suresh Baburaj, 1552 (Flowering).

Distribution: Native to Peru; Cultivated in India particularly in Nilgiris as an garden ornament.

Uses: Frightful convulsions. Half opened lips. Mouth convulsively closed and nostrils dilated (Boericke, 1984).

Exogonium purga Benth. In Lindle Bot. Reg. t.49. 1847; Anonymous, Wealth of India 3:236. 1952; Rajan in J. Econ. Tax. Bot. 10: 448.1992. *Ipomea purga* Hayne, Getreue Darstell. Gew. 12.tt. 33-34. 1833 (CONVOLVULACEAE).

Common name : *"Jalap"*

A climbing herb. Leaves alternate, saggitate-cordate, 7-9 palmately nerved ca 9*6 cm., petiole upto 4.5 cm. long, penduncle generally 1-flowered, longer than the petioles. Flowers rose-purple, corolla 7.5 cm. long with a plat lip. Fruit not seen.

Fl.: April – May and September – November

Specimens examined : Government Botanical garden, Udhagamandalam, 21.9.1987, Rajan 2035 (Flowering), Doddabetta Reserve Forest, 21.11.1987, 2057 (Flowering) and 28.10.1990, 3703 (Flowering).

Distribution: Indigenous to Mexican Adens; introduced into India, cultivated and also found as a garden escape in the high altitude of Nilgiris.

Uses : Anus soreness. Coryza. Diarrhoea. Gout. Fainting Restlessness (Clarke, 1982).

Fagus sylvatica L., Sp. Pl. 998. 1753; Matthew in Rec. Bot. Surv. India 20(1): 204.1969; Kirshnamurthy, Hort.Econ.pl. Nilgiris 214. 1953; Rajan in J.Econ. Tax. Bot. 10: 455, 1992 (FAGADEAE).

Common name : *"European Beach"*

Trees, branches spreading up to 20 m high, bark smooth. Leaves alternate, ovate or elliptic, margins distinctly serrate, ciliate when young, lateral veins 5 – 10 pairs, dark green and glossy above, pale beneath 13 * 5cm., petiole very short. Flowers on axillary's . Fruits ovaid, brownish, 3-angled, nut in a prickly involucre's, edible.

*Fl. a*nd *Fr. :* September – November

Specimens examined : Government Botanical Garden., Udhagamandalam, 29.09.1987, Rajan 2037 (Fl. & Fr.) and 28.10.1990 3704 (Fl. & Fr.)

Distribution : Indigenous in Central and S. Europe; in South India grown in Nilgiris and Kodaikanal hills.

Uses : Epilepsy. Headache. Hydrophobia and Vertigo (Clarke, 1982).

Heliotropium peruvianum L., Sp. Pl. ed. 2. 1:187. 1762; Gamble, Fl. Madras 2: 897.1924; Ramamurthy in Henry *et al.*, Fl. Tamilnadu 2:100.1987. *H. arborescense* L., Sp. Pl. 1753 (BORAGINACEAE).

Common name : *"Heliptrope"*, *"Cherry Pie"*.

Erect, aromatic herb up to 1m. high. Leaves alternate, ovate or oblong-lanceolate, 6 * 3 cm., prominently nerved, upper dark-green, lower pale. Flowers pale-pink to lilac-blue, fragrant small in a close cyme, terminal and axillary. Fruit not seen.

Fl. : April – May and September – October.

Specimen examined : Government Botanical Garden, Udhagamandalam, 13.07.1986, Rajan 1543 (Flowering).

Distribution : Indigenous to Peru, grown as a ornamental in temperate gardens in India. Planted as a hedge plant in Government Botanical Garden, Udhagamandalam.

Uses : Headache in the forehead. Pressute in the pit of the stomach and internal surface of the stermum. Pain in the outer portion of the leg, above the ankle. Itching on the tibia (Boericke, 1984).

Myrtus communis L., Sp. Pl. 571. 1753; Duthie in Hook. F. Fl. Brit. India 2 : 462. 1878; Mathew in roc. Bot. Surv. India 20(1) : 103. 1969; Chitra in Nair & Henry, Fl. Tamil Nadu 1: 154. 1983 (MYRTACEAE).

Common name : *"Myrtle"*

Shrub aromatic, branched, evergreen up to 2 m. high. Leaves opposite and alternate, ovate-lanceolate 4 * 1.5 cm., shining. Flowers while axillary, sepals 5, petals 5, rounded, often tinged with rose. Stamens numerous, anthers yellow. Fruit not seen.

Fl. : April – June and September – November.

Species examined : Government Botanical Garden, Udhagamandalam, 21.04.1986, Rajan 1366 (Flowering) and 26.06.1992 4390 (Flowering).

Distribution: Indigenous to W. Asia and the Mediterranean region; introduced into India and cultivated in hill stations of South India.

Uses : The leaves contain Myrtol, an active antiseptic, chest pains, as found often in consumptives, call for this remedy. Nerve sedative and stimulant to mucose membrances, bronchitis, cystitis, cystitis and pyelitis (Beoricke, 1984).

Primula obconica Hance, in J. bot. 18. 234. 1880; Anonymous, Wealth of India 8: 243. 1969; Rajan in J. Econ. Tax. Bot. 10: 446. 1992 (PRIMULACEAE).

Common name : *"Primrose"*.

Herb with loose-hairy leaves up to 30 cm. high, slender. Leaves rosette, ovateoblong or rotund-oblong 7*7 cm., base sub-cordate, petiole ca. 7cm. long. Bracts small. Linear and unequal. Flowers violet-pink in umbels, sepals 5, petals 5, stamens . Fruit not seen.

Fl : March – May and September – October.

Specimen examined : Government Botanical Garden, Udhagamandalam, 19.5.1986, Raajn 1369 (Flowering).

Distribution: Introduce in to India and grown in temperate regions of Nilgiris.

Uses : Chapped hands. Eczema. Eyes inflammation. Itching. Liver pain, skin affection, spleen pain (Clarke, 1982).

Quillaja saponaria Molinga, Sagg. Chil. 175. 354. 1782; Anonymous, Wealth of India 8: 357. 1969; Sharma et al., Biol. Mem. 2(1&2): 54.1977; Rajan in J. Econ. Tax. Bot. 10:440.1992 (ROSACEAE).

Common name : *"Soap Bark Tree", "Quillaia Bark", "Panama Bark".*

A large tree upto 25 m high. Leaves alternate, simple, thick-coriaceous, entire, petiole very short, leaf margin distinctly serrate. Flowers sessile, white in umbel, axillary and terminal, 3 – 5 flowered, diocious, calyx 5, corollar 5, small. Stamens 10 (5+5), carpels 5-lobed. Fruits yellowish green, 5-lobed.

Fl : March – May and September – October.

Fr.: June – August and November – February.

Specimens examined : Government Botanical Garden, Udhagamandalam, 24.10.1986, Rajan 1641 (Flowering), Breeks Memorial School, Campus, Udhagamandalam, 2.2.1991, Suresh 3867 (Fruiting) and 20.6.1992, Rajan 4389 (Fruiting).

Distribution : Indigenous to Chile and Peru; introduced in to India grown in Udhagamandalam, Nilgiris district.

Schinus Molle L., Sp. Pl. 388. 1753; Matthew in Rec. BOT. Surv. India 20(1) : 67.1969; Sharma et al., Biol. Mem. 2 (1 & 2): 36.1997; Chitra in Nair & Henry, Fl. Tamil Nadu 1:89. 1983; Rajan in J. Econ. Tax. Bot. 10:437.1992 (ANACARDIACEAE).

Common name : *"Peruvian Mastic tree", California Pepper-tree".*

Tree branched, pendulous up to 15 m. high. Leaves alternate, odd-pinnate, leaflets 20 – 25, sessile, linear-lan-ceolate, aromatic, distinctly serrate. Flowers in axillary, panicles yellowish-white. Fruit globose, rose-red when mature.

Fl.: May – July and September – November.

Fr.: July – August and December – January.

Specimens examined : Government Botanical Garden, Udhagamandalam, 22.7.1985, Rajan 737 (Flowering); Mysore Palace Campus, Udhagamandalam, 18.12.1987 , dawre 2159 (Fruiting).

Distribution : Indigenous to Tropical South America; introduced in to India; planted in gardens of Nilgiris and Kodaikanal for ornamental purposes.

Uses : Diarrhoea. Liver gripping pain. Cesophagus dryness. Spinal cord drawing and vomiting (Clarke, 1982).

Senecio biocolor (willd.) Tod., Indi. Sem. Hort. Panorom. 1859; 30.1860. sub sp.*cineraria* (DC). Chater, Bot. Jour. Linn. Soc. 68. 273. 1974. *Cineraria bicolor* Willd. Sp. Pl. 3: 2085. 1803; Fl. Europea 4 : 194. 1976. *Senecio cineraria* DC. Prodr. 6:355. 1838; Chandrasekaran in Henry *et al.*, Fl. Tamil Nadu 2 : 47. 1987. *Cineraria maritime* L., Sp. Pl. ed. 2. 925. 1762 (ASTERACEAE).

Common name : *" Dusty Miller".*

Herb upto 1m high, periennial, woody, stem and leaves cottony white. Leaves pinnatifid, segments, oblong-obtuse, green above, white beneath. Flowers golden yellow in heads radiate (appearing like a single flower but actually composed of few to many small flowers (florets), ray florets 6 mm. long, disc florets with papus bristles, stamens 5, filaments free, style 9 mm. long and divides at the top into two branches, pappus while, longer than the fruit. Fruit an achenes 3mm. long, oblong, slightly ribbed.

Fl. : April – June and September – November

Fr. : June – August and November – December.

Specimens examined : Cinchona cultivation Farm, Doddabetta, 29.9.1984, Dawre 377 (Flowering).

Distribution : Native to Mediterranean region; introduced into India and cultivates as a garden ornament in Nilgiris.

Uses : It cures cataract and corneal opacities. It is used externally, by instilling into the eye one drop four to five times a day. Most effective in traumatic cases (Boericke, 1984).

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