

## OBSERVATIONS ON WILD PLANTS USED IN FOLK MEDICINE IN THE RURAL AREAS OF THE KOLHAPUR DISTRICT

UPADHYE ANURADHA, M. S. KUMBHOJKAR AND V. D. VARTAK

*Maharashtra Association for the Cultivation of Science Research Institute, Law College Road, Pune – 411 004, India.*

---

**Received: 04 December 1985**

**Accepted: Revised Manuscript 11 June, 1986**

---

**ABSTRACT:** *This paper deals with the wild medicinal plants used by rural population of south-western part of Kolhapur district, Maharashtra State. The authors gathered data on 34 species of locally available wild plants used in curing common human ailments. The plants are arranged according to the type of ailment. Vernacular name of each species followed by its botanical name, relevant plant family and known use of the plant in local medicine are given.*

### INTRODUCTION

Some selected wild plants are used by tribal and rural people for curing human ailments. During our routine botanical plant collection tours, especially for our studies on the sacred groves, we collected data on folk medicines from some plants used in local medicine. These records are based on interviews with elderly persons and consist of information which has been traditionally passed down from generation to generation. It is needless to say that such information require verification through experimental work and clinical investigation in order to ascertain and establish their utility and efficacy in therapeutics. This paper presents data on 34 wild medicinal plants collected from the forest areas of the Kolhapur District since 1980.

For many centuries, the tribal community had a traditionally self-managed system of folk medicine and primary health care mainly based on herbal remedies. This system has certain relevance to the great traditional science of Ayurveda, People

living in the rural communities still depend on the knowledge of local 'Vaidu' or 'Bhagat' for primary health care. These local Doctors use seasonally available local flora and fauna for healing human illness. They collect the herbal material available in hilly areas and store it in the form of dried twigs or fruits. Sincere efforts should be made to train these tribal communities in procuring proper and genuine plant material and in using it as drugs with due care and thorough understanding. Medicos with University degrees are also urged to take keen interest in the knowledge and use of appropriate folk medicine in rural areas before its extinction. Sacred – groves, which are forest preserved on the religious grounds (locally known as *Deo – rai*), are well – known for their rich flora and fauna. It has also been observed that these spots are famous for good growth of medicinal plants. Local 'Vaidu' proudly refers these *sacred – groves* as God's dispensaries (Gadgil & Vartak 1981; Vartak 1982).

Area under consideration in the present article includes hilly rural areas of Kolhapur district (73°8' – 74°8' E long. and 15°7 – 17°22 N lat.) from Maharashtra state. It has been found that in this region about 34 plant species are used commonly as home remedies in rural communities. The plants are well confirmed with the help of available literature (Chopra *et al* 1956; Cooke 1967.) Voucher specimens of these plants are deposited in the Maharashtra Association for the cultivation of Science herbarium. The medicinal plants recorded are arranged below according to their uses. The vernacular name is followed by the botanical name, name of plant family and known use in the local medicine.

## ENUMERATION

### Plants used for cold and cough

1. *Ran – tur* : *Atylosia lineate* W. & A. (*Fabaceae*). Leaves are collected and dried. The dried leaves are smoked in Asthma and Cough.
2. *Pundha* : *Heracleum panda* Dalz (*Apiqceae*) Seeds are collected, dried and given for cold and cough along with hot water.
3. *Son – Gardal* : *Mucuna monosperma* DC. (*Fabaceae*). Seeds are crushed with water and given for cold and cough.
4. *Akkal – Kadha* : *Spilanthus acmella* Murr. (*Asteraceae*) Root extract of this plant is given for cold and cough.

### Plants used for cuts and burns

1. *Kandar* : *Aeginetia indica* L (*Orobanchaceae*) The lump of the black powdery matured seeds is applied on burns.

2. *Ran – tur* : *Atylosia lineate* (*Fabaceae*) Fresh leaves are crushed in water and thick paste is placed on cuts.
3. *Tiphan* : *Allophylus serratus* (*Sapindaceae*) Young leaves of this plant are crushed and applied on cut.
4. *Chandada* : *Macaranga peltata* Muell, (*Euphorbiaceae*) Yellow latex is obtained from the plant. It is used to check blood flow from the cut or bleeding wounds.
5. *Dagadi, Eka – dandi*: *Tridax procumbens* (*Asteraceae*) Crushed leaves are applied on minor injuries.

### Plants used for sink diseases

1. *Osadi* : *Ageratum conyzoides* L. (*Asteraceae*) Leaves of this plant are crushed and applied externally on ringworms.
2. *Burumbi* : *Ammora lawi* Bedd. (*Meliaceae*) Leaves are allowed to decompose and then applied for any type of skin diseases.
3. *Bibati* : *Blumeans* p. (*Asteraceae*) Leaf juice is applied on skin for rash due to Bibba *Semecarpus anacardium* L. f.
4. *Owi, Pori, Tambati* : *Melanthesa turbinataw* (*Euphorbiaceae*) In case of redness of skin the leaf juice of this plant is applied.
5. *Bahava* : *Cassia fistula* L. (*Ceasalpiniaceae*) Leaf juice is applied for ringworm infection by local peoples.
6. *Kanguni* : *Celastrus paniculara* (*Celastraceae*) Oil is obtained from the

seeds of this climber. The oil is said to be effective remedy for skin diseases.

7. *Ukshi* : *Calycopteris floribunda* Lam, (*Combretaceae*) Leaf juice of the climber is said to be useful for white patches on the skin.
8. *Umber* : *Ficus glomerata* Roxb. (*Moraceae*) Latex from the leaves is used for dermatitis.

### Plants used for dysentery

1. *Makadi, Matangi* : *Atlantia monophylla* Dc. (*Rutaceae*) Leaves are used by tribals as antidyenteric.
2. *Pandhra kuda* : *Holarrhena antidysenterica* Wall. (*Apocynaceae*) Root is antidyenteric. A suspension of root is made along with butter milk and given. Usually the fresh root is used as it is more effective than that of the stored one.
3. *Gel – phal*: *Randia dymentorum* Lam. (*Rubiaceae*) When there is vomiting along with diarrhoea then Stem bark of the Gel phal is used externally as well as internally.

### Plants used for stomach – ache

1. *Bahava* : *Cassia fistula* L. (*Cesalpiniaceae*) Stem bark is eaten raw for the stomach ache.
2. *Padali* : *Cyclea peltata* H. F. & T. (*Menispermaceae*) Root of this plant is eaten raw for the stomach ache.
3. *Bhamburda, Elephants leg, Agaiendom* : *Elephantophys scaber* L. (*Asteraceae*) Water suspension of the root is used with sugar and few seeds of *Cuminum*

*cuminum*. It is said to be very effective for stomach pain.

4. *Nana* : *Lagerstroemia lanceolasia* wall (*Lythraceae*) Stem bark of this plant is given for the continuous pain in the abdomen.
5. *Pandhari* : *Murraya paniculara* Jack. (*Rutaceae*) Leaf juice is mixed with seven garlic buds and seven pepper seeds and given for chronic stomach ache.

### Plants used for animal bite and insect bite

1. *Kombad – nakhi* : *Aspidium* sp. (*Polypodiaceae*) Root is used for snake – bite. Root is made in suspension and drooped in nose. The root is also used internally after frying in ghee.
2. *Ukshi* : *Calycopteris floribunda* Lam. (*Combretaceae*) Leaf juice is applied externally for insect bite.
3. *Kusar* : *Jasminum malbaricum* W. (*Oleaceae*) For lizard poison the leaf juice is applied.
4. *Narkya, Amruta, Ghanera* : *Nothapodytes foetida* (Wt.) Sleumer ( *Icacinaceae*). Root of this plant is used for dog poison. The root is made in to suspension along with the water and applied on a bite. It is also taken internally for three days.
5. *Rukhalu* : *Remusatia vivipara* Schott. (*Araceae*) Root is externally used for snake bite.
6. *Kirmira* : *Glycosmis pentaphylla* Corr. (*Rutaceae*) Leaves of this plant is used for the mouse bite. The leaf juice is given with pepper and garlic.

### Plants used for abscesses

1. *Kavalacha dola* : *Cucurbita* sp  
(*Cucurbitaceae*) Leaves of this climber are crushed and applied on an abscess.
2. *Kerit* : *Cucumis trigonus* Roxb.  
(*Cucurbitaceae*) Fruits are cooked and applied on an abscess.
3. *Kapur bhendi* : *Turraea villosa* Benn.  
(*Meliaceae*) Leaf suspension is applied on an abscess.
4. *Chikna* : *Sida rhombifolia* Linn.  
(*Malvaceae*) Leaves are crushed and applied on an abscess.

### Plants used for swellings

1. *Chitrak* : *Plumbago zeylanica* L.  
(*Plumbaginaceae*) Root is poisonous and used for swelling externally.
2. *Hura* ; *Sapium insigne* Trim.  
(*Euphorbiaceae*) Leaf latex is used for any type of swelling followed by chronic pain.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors are thankful to the Director, M. A. C. S. Research Institute for giving facilities and also thank Miss V.Y. Dabaghao for valuable help in field work. Financial aid from the Department of Environment, Government of India, for floristic survey of sacred groves is also gratefully acknowledged.

### REFERENCES

- Gadgil, Madhav & V. D. Vartak, Sacred groves of Maharashtra. In '*Glimpses of Indian Ethnobotany*', Ed. S; K. Jain. Oxford & IBH Pub. Co., New Delhi, (1981).
- Vartak, V. D. Studies on ethnobotany of Maharashtra & Goa. *Tribal Res. Bull.*, Vol. 4, No. 2, 9 - 10 (1982)
- Chopra, R. N., S. L. Nayar & I. C. Chopra, *Glossary of the Indian Medicinal Plants*, CSIR Publication, New Delhi (1956).
- Cooke, T. *Flora of the Presidency of Bombay*. Reprinted ed, B. S. I. Publication, Calcutta, (1967).