

Article on Conservation and Promoting of Medicinal Plants and their Importance for Sustainability

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Nature has the best ways of healing and curing. Having been rooted in practical wisdom, indigenous system of medicine is in practice in some of the areas even today where the plants are the ultimate source of medicine, used in the drug development either pharmacopoeial, non pharmacopoeial or synthetic drugs. Many species of flowering plants are considered to have core medicinal values on which most of the rural people are dependent for their medicines. They are important source of nutrition recommended for their therapeutical uses, having no side effects and permanently eliminating the root cause of the disease.

Knowing the importance of these medicinal plants, we the Eco Club, Department of Botany at Andhra Mahila Sabha, Arts and Science College for Women, maintain a botanical garden enriching the herbal and medicinal plants. Under the co curricular activities we initiate environmental action to channelize the constructive ways to protect the environment. Even as a part of the academic curriculum, we practically grow the medicinal plants by assigning projects to the students and involving them. We have been maintaining 40 species of medicinal plants in our botanical garden.

Plant species like *Aloe vera* (Aloe), *Andrographis paniculata* (Nelavemu), *Anisomeles malabarica* (Magabeera), *Acmella oleracea* (Tooth ache Plant), *Bryophyllum*(Ranapala), *Coleus forskohlii* (Coleus), *Cymbopogan citratus* (Lemon Grass), *Crotolaria juncea*(Sun hemp), *Catharanthus roseus* (Periwinkle), *Costus igneus* (Insulin Plant), *Centella asiatica* (Saraswathi), *Clitoris ternatea* (Shankupushpam), *Commifora mukul*(Guggulu), *Curcuma longa*(Pasupu), *Curcuma amada* (Mamaidi allam), *Gymnema sylvestre* (Poda pathri), *Justicia adhatoda* (Addasaram), *Lavendula spica* (Lavender) *Lawsonia inermis* (Gorintaku), *Mentha canadensis* (Japanese mint), *Notonia grandiflora* (kundelu chevulu), *Ocimum basilium* (Sabja), *Ocimum tenuiflorum* (Lakshmi Tulasi), *Ocimum kilimandscharicum* (Karpooora tulasi), *Origanum marjorana* (Maruvam), *Punica granatum* (Pomegranate), *Rosemarinum officinalis* (Rosemary) , *Ruta graveolens* (Sadapaku), *Sauropus androgynus*(multivitamin plant), *Stachyterpheta indica* (Indian snake weed), *Trachyspermum ammi*(Vaamu), *Withania sominifera* (Ashwagandha), *Zinziber officinale* (Ginger), *Achras sapota* (Sapota), *Aegle marmelos* (Maredu), *Annona squamosa* (Sithaphalam), *Butea monosperma*(Moduga), *Nyctanthes-arbor-tristis*(Paarijaatham), *Terminalia chebula* (Karakkaya), *Vitex negundo* (Vavili) are maintained in the botanical garden.

Anisomeles malabarica which is used for anti allergic properties, Ashwagandha for anti tumour, Acmella oleracea decoction for tooth ache, Coleus forskohlii for respiratory and other relative disorders , Cymbopogon citrates for natural citral, Centella asiatica for enhancing memory, Curcuma amada an appetizer, Lawsonia inermis for prickly heat, Notonia grandiflora for treating pimples, Zingiber officinale contains expectorant and good digestive activity, Aloe vera which is used as irritant purgative, Aegle marmelos is used in treating diarrhoea, Anti-diabetic plants like Gymnema sylvestris and Costus igneus which are rarely found are exclusively maintained in our botanical garden.

As quoted by Hippocrates "Let food be thy medicine, medicine be thy food" plants help us in maintaining good health by providing vitamins, minerals and anti-oxidants which are phytochemicals that we are accessing through our diet. Herbal remedies are based on the knowledge that most natural food possesses many medicinal virtues and refined as natural cures and are used as medicines.

Herbal plants are easy to grow yielding good results with less effort. They can be grown everywhere in a confined space. Medicinal plants have a promising future; can be used as synergic medicine, preventive medicine and support of official medicine. Traditional medicine restores the individual's spiritual, mental, emotional and physical health. However in western medicine the body is the domain of the medical doctor, the mind the domain of the psychiatrist and spirit is left to the priest. The plants are prone to many anthropogenic problems and getting endangered. Hence, we try to put a step forward in spreading the awareness about the medicinal value and conservation of biodiversity. It is important to bring the age old uses into limelight and motivate the society for promoting medicinal plants for their sustainability.
