



# **NATURE'S PHARMACY**

**Capturing the essence of medicinal plants**

2024

Master of Public Health  
Azim Premji University


# FOREWORD



The Sambhavna Trust Clinic has tried to live up to its name which means “possibility”, ever since its inception. Our story of providing long term medical care to little over 30 thousand individuals with history of toxic exposure in the last three decades is the story of possibilities in health care based on integration of Ayurveda and Yoga with Modern medicine.

In following the principles of “first do no harm” in Ayurveda care, we faced the problem of questionable quality of Ayurvedic medicines available in the market. Ayurvedic formulations from leading brands were known to contain potentially harmful amounts of heavy metals, there were publications in prestigious scientific journals pointing this out. It was also known that many of the herbal ingredients were grown using synthetic fertilizers and pesticides. The Clinic started organic cultivation of medicinal plants first in clay pots and then in a garden spread over one and half acres.

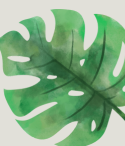
In 2004 as the Clinic’s herbal garden was getting ready, the Ayurveda Physicians began advising persons with joint pains to get Nirgundi (*Vitex negundo*) and Eranda (*Ricinus communis*) leaves for relief in pain in large and small joints, Tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum*) leaves for cough and cold, Neem (*Azadirakhta indica*) and Aloe vera (*Aloe barbadensis*) for skin problems. With time as the garden grew the use of raw herbs for treatment of several complaints was included in the Clinic’s treatment protocols after close monitoring of effectiveness and side effects. Physicians at the Clinic today advise medicines straight out of the herbal garden for pain in joints, cough and cold, bleeding piles, non-healing ulcers, renal stones, and different skin diseases with very encouraging results.



The creation of possibilities through plant medicines led us to an effective strategy in another area of Sambhavna Clinic’s work. For several years Sambhavna’s community health workers struggled ineffectively against the community’s dependence on unqualified medical practitioners who routinely gave potentially harmful medicines that compounded the injuries caused by toxic exposure. Things changed after growing community herbal gardens was included in the work among a population of 30 to 40 thousand. With hundreds of residents now growing and using 10 to 12 plants that take care of a significant proportion of common health problems, the dependence on street doctors has gone down drastically.

We are lucky to have Public Health students from Azim Premji University spreading the story of possibilities through this small booklet. We hope the students continue to be fascinated by medicinal plants and bigger and better versions of this booklet will follow in the near future.

**Satinath Sarangi (‘Sathyu’)**  
**Sambhavna Trust Clinic, Bhopal**






# PREFACE

Welcome to the space of medicinal plants which are readily available in our immediate vicinity as nature's pharmacy for commonly occurring health issues. Since time immemorial, medicinal plants have played a pivotal role in the process of healing and well-being. In this booklet, we have collated information about seventeen medicinal plants which we learned during a two-day field training at the Sambhavna Trust Clinic.

Sambhavna Trust Clinic was set up in September 1996 to serve the survivors of the infamous Bhopal Gas Tragedy. For years, the survivors were being subjected to synthetic medicines for conditions that didn't have any cure or standard treatment guidelines. The organization came up with the idea of integrating Allopathy with Ayurveda and Yoga. Subsequently, a herbal garden was established in the compound of the Clinic which now has more than a hundred varieties of medicinal plants. These plants are used to treat conditions ranging from urinary tract infections to joint pains, yielding good results.



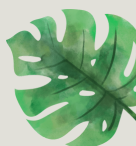
If this integrated medicine is showing better results for gas tragedy survivors with diverse complaints, it offers hope that a deeper understanding of herbs can empower the general population to address minor ailments at home without resorting to unnecessary medications. And so, as students of Public Health, practicing and spreading such knowledge in our community becomes our moral duty. Following our training at the Sambhavna Trust Clinic, we sowed fifteen varieties of medicinal plants at our university campus. These plants have significant potential in addressing common issues like fever, cold and cough, headache, and body aches.

We would like to thank all the members of Sambhavna Trust Clinic who trained us by giving their precious time. A special thanks to Ratna Didi who took us through each plant and taught us about their usage. We also owe our gratitude to Unnikrishnan P. who reviewed the initial draft of this booklet and gave his valuable comments.

This is a beginning for us, and we want this booklet to be a live document. We hope that future batches of Public Health students get a similar exposure, develop such sensitivity, learn about more varieties of medicinal plants, and add to the content of this booklet.

As you delve into the pages, we invite you to appreciate the manifold array of medicinal plants, insights, and their immense potential to address common ailments. For each plant, we have listed conditions in which it can be used, the form and method of preparation, and some do's and don'ts. This was done in consultation with Veena who is an ayurvedic practitioner and currently pursuing MPH at the university. We hope this booklet inspires you to develop a deeper connection and understanding of the infinite beauty of nature and embrace the traditional systems of healing. Happy reading!

**Glorgio, Inam, Om, Rakesh B., Rakesh G. and Veena**  
**(Master of Public Health, Batch 2023-25)**



*It's advisable to initiate herbal home remedies at the onset of symptoms. If there's no improvement after three days or if symptoms worsen, it's important to seek prompt medical attention from a physician. Remember to be mindful of the dosage and duration when using herbal remedies.*



## The Expanding List

1. Adusa (Malabar Nut)
2. Haldi (Turmeric)
3. Tulsi (Holy Basil)
4. Aloe Vera
5. Erandi (Castor)
6. Changeri (Indian Sorrel)
7. Makoi (Black Nightshade)
8. Kadhi Patta (Curry Leaf)
9. Giloy
10. Arjun tree
11. Gudhal (Hibiscus)
12. Shatavari (Indian Asparagus)
13. Chirol (Indian Elm)
14. Ashwagandha (Indian Winter Cherry)
15. Lemon Grass
16. Chirayita
17. Pila Bhringraj (Chinese Wedelia)
18. Do's and Don'ts



# Adusa (Malabar Nut)

## Name of the Plant

Adusa (Malabar Nut)

## Other common names:

Adulsa, Adoosa, Vasa

## Scientific Name

*Justicia adhatoda*

## Conditions where it can be used:

- Cough and Cold
- Breathlessness
- Fever



## How to use:

- Cough, Cold, and Breathlessness: Take two Adusa leaves and heat them in water vapors until they soften. Once softened, gently squeeze the leaves to extract the juice. Consume one teaspoon of this leaf juice with one teaspoon of honey, twice a day for five days.
- Fever: Make kadha (decoction) by boiling two Adusa leaves, one inch of fresh Giloy (*Tinospora cordifolia*) stem and eight to ten leaves of Tulsi in four cups of water. Reduce it to one cup and drink twice a day before food for five days.

## Note:

- Avoid using Adusa during pregnancy and breastfeeding.
- If fever or breathlessness persists for more than three days or worsens, seek medical advice from a physician promptly.

# Haldi (Turmeric)

## Name of the Plant

Haridra

## Scientific Name

*Curcuma longa*

## Conditions where it can be used:

- Cough and cold
- Weak immunity
- Flatulence and Diarrhea
- Insect bite and sting
- Burns
- Skin problems



## How to use:

- Cough, cold, and throat irritation: Use one teaspoon of rhizome (Kanda) juice with a glass of lukewarm milk twice a day for five days.
- Weak immunity: mix one pinch of Turmeric powder with one teaspoon of ghee and consume daily after food.
- Flatulence and Diarrhea: Use half teaspoon of juice of rhizome or dry powder with one glass of buttermilk after food twice a day for three to five days.
- Insect bite and sting: Externally apply paste of Rhizome.
- Burns: Mix one teaspoon of Turmeric powder with one teaspoon of Aloe vera gel and apply on the affected area.
- Skin problems: Mix one teaspoon of Turmeric powder with one teaspoon of Aloe vera gel and apply on the affected area. If the skin is oily, then use yoghurt; if skin is normal, then use the paste directly; and if skin is dry, then use milk.

## Precautions:

Excessive dose of Turmeric may cause stomach ulcers. Avoid taking Turmeric formulations if you have gall stones or bile duct issues or using blood thinners.

# Tulsi (Holy Basil)

## Name of the Plant

Tulsi (Holy Basil)

## Scientific Name:

*Ocimum sanctum*

## Conditions where it can be used:

- Skin Infection
- Immunity
- Cold and Cough
- Fever



## How to use:

- Skin infection: Grind eight to ten Tulsi leaves into a fine paste and apply it directly to the affected area or mix the Tulsi paste with a fine paste of half inch Turmeric rhizome before application. To clean the affected area, boil eight to ten Tulsi leaves and an equal amount of Neem leaves in one liter of water and use this water to wash the affected skin.
- Indigestion and for Immunity: Make kadha by boiling six to eight fresh leaves of Tulsi, along with half inch Ginger, and four to five grains of black pepper in four cups of water and reduce it to one cup. Strain the kadha and drink twice a day before food.
- Cough and Cold: Take a few Tulsi leaves and boil them in a glass of water. After straining the mixture, mix it with one teaspoon of honey and drink twice a day for five days. Boiling three to four leaves in water and inhaling the steam also helps to relieve cold and respiratory issues.
- Fever: Make kadha (decoction) by boiling eight to ten leaves of Tulsi, one inch of fresh Ginger, three to four grains of black pepper in four cups of water. Reduce it to one cup and drink twice a day before food for five days.

## Note:

Excessive use of Tulsi may cause burning sensation in the stomach.

# Aloe Vera

## Name of the Plant:

Aloe Vera

## Other common names:

Gwar patha, Ghrita Kumari

## Scientific Name

*Aloe barbadensis*

## Conditions where it can be used:

- Constipation
- Skin care
- Hair care
- Burns
- Anemia
- Joint Pain



## How to use:

- Constipation: Take one teaspoon of leaf pulp, make it into a paste, and add a pinch of rock salt. Mix well and consume this mixture on an empty stomach for two days.
- Skin and hair care: Take the pulp of the Aloe vera leaf and mix it with coconut oil. Blend well and use twice a day externally.
- Burns: Apply the fresh leaf pulp of Aloe vera over the affected part.
- General weakness, anemia, and joint and muscle pain – use Aloe vera laddu or halwa



**Aloe Vera Halwa:** Take fresh Aloe vera pulp from the leaves and grind well. Mix one cup of semolina (Suji) with two cups of Aloe vera, creating a thin batter, and let it rest for 20 minutes. In a separate pan, make sugar syrup with one cup of sugar, add one cup of ghee and cardamom powder, and cook on high flame. Add the semolina-aloe vera mix and cook on medium flame until it thickens. Add roasted nuts for flavor. Once the halwa reaches your preferred consistency, remove it from heat and let it cool.



**Aloe Vera Laddu:** Take fresh Aloe Vera pulp from the leaves and grind it. Mix the Aloe Vera paste with two cups of wheat flour to make a dough. Shape small balls from the dough and deep fry them in oil, then let them cool. Crush the fried wheat-Aloe Vera balls into a powder. In a separate pan, roast this powder in one cup of ghee. Add one cup of sugar and roasted nuts to the mixture, stirring well. Turn off the flame once the sugar is thoroughly mixed. Enjoy Laddu once it has cooled.

**Precautions:**

Aloe Vera pulp acts as a strong laxative, so if you are having frequent bowel movements, avoid consuming Aloe Vera.

Before applying Aloe Vera gel to your entire face, do a patch test. Apply the gel over a small area and wait. If there are any signs of an allergic reaction (like redness, burning or itching), do not apply it further.



# Changeri (Indian Sorrel)

## Name of the Plant

Changeri (Indian Sorrel)

## Other common names:

Teen Pattia, Ambashta, Amlika

## Scientific Name

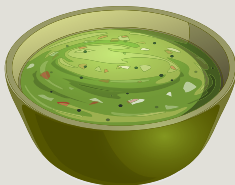
*Oxalis corniculata*

## Conditions where it can be used:

- Mouth ulcer
- Poor appetite

## How to use:

- Mouth ulcer: Chew the five to six fresh leaves; or, make a paste of two to three leaves and mix with honey and externally apply over the mouth ulcer for three days.
- Poor appetite: Use Changeri chutney



Changeri chutney recipe: Wash Changeri leaves and a handful of mint leaves. Grind these leaves with a small piece of Ginger and two garlic cloves and make a smooth paste. Enhance the flavor by adding black salt and roasted cumin seeds to the chutney. Use as a tangy and sour chutney.

