

Medicinal Value of Weeds

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SUMMARY

Weeds are plants that are unwanted in a given situation and may be harmful, dangerous or economically detrimental but in some cases weeds have economic and medicinal values. In this study we have focused on medicinal values of weeds. Under this study generally we discussed medicinal values of about Bathua (*Chenopodium album*), Jungle Chaulai (*Amaranthus viridis*), Punarnava (*Boerhavia diffusa*), Hirankhuri (*Convolvulus arvensis*), Gokhru (*Tribulus terrestris*), Pili Senji (*Melilotus albus*) and Satyanashi (*Argemone Mexicana*). Weeds, however, besides their deleterious impacts in nature, have many beneficial properties, which include, but not limited to benefits of weeds to companion plants, ethnomedical and ethnopharmaceutical uses of weeds, ethnobotanical uses of wild edible weeds, and the use of weeds as feed for livestock. In the light of myriads of deleterious effects and benefits accompanying weeds, it is suggested that more studies should be carried out on weed control and weed management. Also, further explorations on the potential uses of weeds to man, his environments and livestock should be undertaken.

INTRODUCTION

A weed is just a plant growing out of place where it is not desired – a plant which, in many cases, could be used ease indigestion, fight the flu, treat poison ivy rashes and even make a tasty meal. Many weeds are chock full of vitamins, minerals and surprising healing abilities. So why throw away the medicine cabinet and free food in your yard. Despite the negative impacts of weeds, some plants usually thought of as weeds may actually provide some benefits. Some attributes include: soil stabilization, habitat and feed for wildlife, nectar for bees, aesthetic qualities, add organic matter, provide genetic reservoir, human consumption, and provide employment opportunities. Weeds have a controversial nature. But to the agriculturist, they are plants that need to be controlled, in an economical and practical way, in order to produce food, feed, and fibre for humans and animals. In this context, the negative impacts of weeds indirectly affect all living beings.

This research is mostly descriptive in nature. Secondary sources of data have been used for this study and the data has been collected from different published sources like books, journals, newspapers and magazines, and web sites etc.

These Common Weeds Offer a Medicinal Boost

1. Bathua (*Chenopodium album*): Bathua leaves are very good source of high quality protein, nutrients, antioxidants and vitamins, particularly vitamin c and vitamin A. The leaves are rich in fibre and have laxative properties which cure constipation. Due to this property Bathua is also useful in piles. Bathua leaves are a good source of potassium, iron, calcium, and zinc. Bathua is good for the heart. It is considered heart tonic. Bathua leaves are good for the liver, spleen and gall bladder. Bathua improves haemoglobin level. Bathua leaves juice is a traditional medicine for intestinal parasites.
2. Jungle Chaulai (*Amaranthus viridis*): Amaranth leaves are a storehouse of essential phytonutrients and antioxidants which help to reduce inflammation in the body and provide an extra boost of nutrition. Amaranth leaves are rich in iron, calcium, vitamin A, B, C, K. Amaranth leaves are rich in potassium and lysine. Amaranth leaves reduces bad cholesterol and easy to digest.
3. Punarnava (*Boerhavia diffusa*): Having anti-inflammatory and expectorant properties is said to be a good cure for Amavata (a disease in which reduction of Vata Dosha and accumulation of Ama take place in joint(s), and simulates rheumatoid arthritis (RA). Punarnava has also been used for pain relief, anti-inflammation, and treating indigestion. Boerhaavia diffusa has a potent anti-diabetic effects.
4. Hirankhuri. (*Convolvulus arvensis*): The roots of hirankhuri act as a good purgative. The leaves of the plant were believed to enhance the secretion of bile. Hirankhuri also exhibits actions similar to that of anti-diabetic medications. Hirankhuri is believed to exhibit antibacterial and antifungal properties against a broad spectrum of microbes, including E. coli, salmonella species. Bindweed also finds its therapeutic use for treating the effects of

stress in individuals. Bindweed can be used to soothe and calm the mind and nerves. It helps bring about a feeling of being at peace with oneself. Hirankhuri can be used with caution for treatment of depression, anxiety and stress.

5. Gokhru (*Tribulus terrestris*): It's used for the higher care of urinary function and effective kidneys as well as in reducing renal suffering. It also helps in raising the low libido, improving energy and stamina, treating the kidney renal rocks and issues. It is beneficial in reducing the cholesterol levels, which is essential to reduce the risk of heart stroke. It also helps in reducing the blood sugar levels and blood pressure levels. It's rich properties of antibiotic and anti-tumor, helps to combat with the liver cancer. It helps in erectile dysfunction as it encourages the penile tissue by which it enhances the penile erection.

6. Pili Senji (*Melilotus albus*): It is widely used to treat venous issues such as – varicose veins, blood clots in the veins, haemorrhoids and lymphatic congestions. The herb helps in reducing the symptoms of poor blood circulation, a condition which is popularly referred as chronic venous insufficiency. It helps in relieving leg pain and cramps, and solves the problems of inflammatory and congestive edema. It is also used to treat minor sleep related issues and also to treat digestive problems.

7. Satyanashi (*Argimone Mexicana*): Satyanashi is an effective remedy for skin-related problems. Satyanashi powder has anti-bacterial properties that can be used to treat various skin diseases. . The Satyanashi powder made from the root of this plant helps improve sex drive in men. It also promotes the quality and quantity of sperm. Satyanashi promotes increased production of urine. The juice of this plant has diuretic properties that helps one relieve from the difficulty of passing urine and also provides relief from painful urination. Satyanashi root is considered as an excellent remedy for breathing problems. It helps remove the phlegm accumulated in the lungs and provides relief from asthma and breathlessness. Satyanashi leaves have the ability to fight diabetes and helps in the treatment of ulcer.

Some Beneficial Effects of Weeds in Agriculture:

- Weeds provide a vegetative cover that protects the soil surface against erosive action of rain and wind.
- Weeds play an important part in nutrient recycling. Roots of weeds tap nutrients from the lower soil depths and return these to the soil surface as litter when the weeds shed their leaves or when the entire plant plants dies and decays.
- Weeds add organic matter to the soil both from the roots and from the above ground parts.
- Many plants that are designated weeds are used as potherbs e.g Talinum triangulare.
- Weeds are sources of pesticides e.g Chrysanthemum cinerariifolium which provides insecticide pyrethrum.
- Weeds provide food and cover for animal. Wildlife generally depends on weeds for survival as food and shelter.
- Weeds serve as an important source of genetic materials for crop improvement such as breeding for resistance to pests and diseases which are made possible by genetic materials provided by wild species of the crop plants.
- Weeds serve as hosts beneficial insects, and at the same time provide nectar for bees.
- Many weeds help to beautify the landscape. e.g a good ground cover of Cynodon dactylon beautifies the home.

CONCLUSION

Weeds are beneficial to both agricultural and non-agricultural uses in various ways. Weeds, among the myriads of their beneficial properties, can be important sources for new pharmaceuticals and medicine for indigenous people and can have both nutritional role and health benefits. Given myriads of the deleterious effects and the benefits accompanying weeds, it is hereby suggested that more researches should be carried out on weed control and weed management, and more explorations on the potential uses of weeds to man, his environments and livestock are needed.

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