

## EXOTIC MEDICINAL PLANTS USEFUL IN HOMOEOPATHY FOUND IN NILGIRI DISTRICT TAMIL NADU\*

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The Nilgiri District (11o 12' to 11o 43' and 76o 14' and 77o 1' E) of Tamil Nadu has a rich indigenous vegetation with a number of temperate elements in its floristic components (Gupta 1962; Bor 1938; Razi 1955). In addition to its diverse vegetation a number of introduced plants are found to flourish because of the climate which is suitable for such exotics (Menon et al. 1963; Krishnamoorthy 1953; Samraj & Haldorai 1977; Samraj 1981).

Current floristic literature (Sharma et al. 1977; Henry et al. 1987) have listed a number of such aliens, while the economic uses of a few plants have been recorded (Rajan 1992). The present survey team, while exhaustively scrutinising the literature and during field trips in the Nilgiri District, collected a number of such exotics which are found to be useful in the Homoeopathic System of Medicine. These are preserved as exsiccata in the herbarium of the office while a few are being cultivated in the research garden. Even though Nilgiris had been botanized extensively with a number of floras published on its plant wealth (Gamble 1915-36; Fyson 1932), it is seen a number of plants have entered anew into the region (Suresh Baburaj et al. 1991). Of these, the plants useful in the Homoeopathic System of Medicine are listed for use by research workers in pharmacognosy, pharmacists and other botanical workers.

Many of these exotics fetch highly remunerative prices and there is good demand for them in the open market. The package of practices for cultivating many of them are yet to be worked out vis-a-vis the Indian agro-climatic conditions.

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1. **Armoracia rusticana** P. Gaertner, B. Meyer & Scherb.  
= *Cochlearia armoracia* Linn. (Brassicaceae)  
English : Horse Radish.  
Part used : Roots.  
Uses : Albuminuria. Aponia. Asthma.  
Gonorrhoea. Urinary disorders.

Herb with rootstock. Native of Europe; grown to a small extent in private gardens.

2. **Agave americana** Linn. (Agavaceae)  
English : Century Plant.  
Part used : Chopped leaves.  
Uses : Hydrophobia, Scurvy,  
Gonorrhoea.

Succulents with yellow streaks on leaves. Native of South America. Found in gardens.

3. **Anthoxanthum odoratum** Linn. (Gramineae)  
English : Sweet vernal grass.  
Part used : Whole plant.  
Uses : Coryza, Hay Fever.

Native of Europe. A sweet scented herbaceous grass; cultivated in lawns and also as an escape.

4. **Apium graveolens** Linn. (Umbelliferae)  
English : Celery.  
Part used : Seeds and twigs.  
Uses : Anuria, Headache,  
Rheumatism, Dysmenorrhoea.

An erect herb of European origin. Cultivated to a small extent.

5. **Avena sativa** Linn. (Gramineae)  
English : Oats  
Part used : Whole plant. Seeds.  
Uses : Epilepsy. Chorea. Paralysis agitans.

Annual erect grass of European origin. Cultivated as a cereal for fodder.

6. **Argemone mexicana** Linn. (Papaveraceae)  
Part used : Seeds.  
Uses : Bright's Disease. Colic.  
Neuromuscular pains.

Native to South America. Herbs with yellow juice. Flowers yellow. Scarcely found in lower elevations.

7. **Argemone ochroleuca** Sweet (Papaveraceae)  
Part used : Seeds. Whole plant.  
Uses : Chorea. Verminosis and insomnia of children. Beginning of cataract.

Native to South America. Recent entrant in the Nilgiris (Tamil Nadu). Herbs with lemon yellow flowers. A few found in lower elevations.

8. **Bellis perennis** Linn. (Compositae)  
English : English Daisy.  
Part used : Whole plant.  
Uses : Trauma of soft parts like stomach, intestine, pelvic organs; Boils, Rheumatism.

Native of Europe and America. A perennial herb. Flowers white or rose; cultivated in gardens.

9. **Beta vulgaris** Linn. (Chenopodiaceae)  
English : Sugar Beet.  
Part used : Root (tuber).  
Uses : Chronic catarrhal conditions. Tuberculosis.

Native of South Europe. Tuberous annuals, cultivated for vegetable purposes.

10. **Brugmansia suaveolens** (Willd.)Bercht. & J. Presl. (Solanaceae)  
English : Angel's Trumpets.  
Part used : Flowers.  
Uses : Brain affections. Clairvoyance. Vertigo.

Native of South America. A large shrub with white showy flowers. Planted as hedges and also runs wild throughout the district.

11. **Bixa orellana** Linn. (Bixaceae)  
English : Dye Arnatto.  
Part used : Seeds.  
Uses : Leprosy, Eczema, Elephantiasis.

Native of Central America. Planted in a few places. Small trees with pink flowers and red capsules.

12. **Calendula officinalis** Linn (Compositae)  
English : Pot marigold.  
Part used : Leaves and flowers/whole plant.  
Uses : In cases of open wounds, promotes granulation tissue formation. Erysipelas

Native of South Europe. Annuals with yellow head. Cultivated in gardens.

13. **Camellia sinensis** (Linn.) Kuntze (Theaceae)  
=*Thea sinensis* Linn.  
English : Tea.  
Part used : Leaves  
Uses : Delirium tremens. Mania, Paralysis. Nervousness. Neuralgia. Sleeplessness.

Native of Burma/Indo China. Shrubs. Flowers white. Extensively cultivated throughout the district.

14. **Capsella bursa-pastoris** (Linn.) Medicus (Cruciferae)  
(=*Thalspi bursa-pastoris* Linn.)  
English : Shepherd's Purse.  
Part used : Whole plant.  
Uses : Neuralgia. Uterine fibroid. Metrorrhagia. Leucorrhoea. Cystitis. Renal Colic.

Native of Central Europe. Small herbs with triangular or obcordate capsules; weeds of fallow fields.

15. **Capsicum annum** Linn. (Solanaceae)  
English : Bird Chillies.  
Part used : Fruits.  
Uses : Myalgia headache's. Sore throat. stomatitis. urinary tract infection.

Native of West Indies, tropical America. Shrubs.  
Flowers solitary. Cultivated.

16. **Carica papaya** Linn. (Caricaceae)  
English : Papaya

Uses : Digestion of weak patients.  
enlarged spleen and liver.  
Indigestion. Intolerance of milk.

Native of West Indies and Central America.  
Cultivated in lower elevations. Fruits maturing yellow.

17. **Castanea sativa** (Linn.) Mill. (Fagaceae)  
= *C. vesca* Gaertner

English : Sweet Chestnut.  
Part used : Leaves.  
Uses : Whooping Cough. Diarrhoea,  
Lumbago.

Native of temperate Europe and America. A  
deciduous spreading tree, occasionally planted in gar-  
dens.

18. **Cephaelia ipecacuanha** (Brot.) A. Rich.  
(Rubiaceae)

English : Ipecac.  
Part used : Dried root.  
Uses : Amoebic dysentery. Uterine  
haemorrhage. Morning sick-  
ness. Asthma. Intermittent  
Fever.

Introduced from South America. A shrub. Occa-  
sionally cultivated.

19. **Chamaecyparis lawsoniana** (Murr.) Parl.  
= *Cupressus lawsoniana* A. Mur. (Cupressaceae)

English : Lawson's Cypress.  
Part used : Berries and leaves.  
Uses : Terrible pains in stomach.

Native of North America. Tree. Planted in a few  
places.

20. **Cheiranthus cheiri** Linn. (Cruciferae)  
English : Wall flower.  
Part used : Whole plant.  
Uses : Deafness & Otorrhoea.

Removes pain during cutting of  
wisdom teeth.

Native of South Europe. Herb with yellow flow-  
ers, grown as an ornament.

21. **Cinchona calisava** Wedd. (Rubiaceae)

English : Quinine.  
Part used : Bark.  
Uses : Same as *Cinchona officinalis*  
Linn (q.v.)

Native of Peru and Bolivia (South America).  
Trees. Introduced and cultivated.

22. **Cinchona officinalis** Linn. (Rubiaceae)

English : Quinine.  
Part used : Bark.  
Uses : Intermittent fevers.  
Tympanitis. Colic. Jaundice.  
Influenza.

Native of Peru, South America. A slender  
evergreen tree; introduced and cultivated.

23. **Cinnamomum camphora** (Linn.) Nees & Eberm.  
= *Laurus camphora* Linn. (Lauraceae)

English : Camphor.  
Part used : Camphor (crystal and oil).  
Uses : Cholera. In cases of shock,  
Asthma.

Native of China and Japan. Lofty trees. Culti-  
vated in a few places.

24. **Convallaria majalis** Linn. (Liliaceae)

English : Lily of the Valley.  
Part used : Whole plant.  
Uses : Anasarca. Endocarditis.

Native of Europe and Asia. Herb. Cultivated in  
gardens.

25. **Citrus aurantium** Linn. var. Hook f. (Rutaceae)  
*bigaradia*

English : Seville orange.  
Part used : Peel.  
Uses : Headache. Vertigo. Facial  
neuralgia. Metrorrhagia.

26. **Citrus grandis** (Linn.) Osbeck (Rutaceae)  
= *C. decumana* (Linn.) Murray.  
English : Pomelo. Shaddock.  
Part used : Fruits.  
Uses : Tinnitus. Head noises. Sensation of pressure in temporal region.

Native to Thailand and Malaysia. Trees. Fruits sour. Cultivated to a small extent.

27. **Coffea arabica** Linn. (Rubiaceae)  
English : Coffee.  
Part used : Fresh or roasted berries.  
Uses : (Fresh): Neuralgia. Increased uric acid, Hypersensitivity, Excitement. Ecstasy.  
(Roasted): Antidote to poisons. Migraine. Labour pains. Urinary affections. Vertigo.

Native to Ethiopia. Shrubs. Berries maturing red. Cultivated in certain places.

28. **Datura arborea** Linn. (Solanaceae)  
English : Tree Datura.  
Part used : Flowers.  
Uses : Brain affections. Clairvoyance. Vertigo.

Native to South America. A shrub with pendent white flowers. Rarely cultivated.

29. **Datura sanguinea** Ruiz & Pav. (Solanaceae)  
Part used : Fruits.  
Uses : Epilepsy. Convulsions.

Native to South America. A subshrub with reddish yellow flowers; cultivated in gardens, occasionally runs wild.

30. **Digitalis purpurea** Linn. (Scrophulariaceae)  
English : Fox glove.  
Part used : Leaves.  
Uses : Cardiac diseases. Mitral valve diseases. Pericarditis. Cardiac dropsy. Chronic bronchitis.

Native to Western Europe. Herbs with rosetted leaves, white, rose or pink flowers. Cultivated in gardens.

31. **Eschscholtzia californica** Cham. (Papaveraceae)  
English : Californian poppy.  
Part used : Whole plant.  
Uses : General weakness. Accelerated respiration. Torpor.

Probably native of America. Herb with bright orange or rarely white flowers. Grown in gardens.

32. **Eucalyptus globulus** Labill. (Myrtaceae)  
English : Blue gum.  
Part used : Leaves.  
Uses : Powerful antiseptic. Influenza. Acute diarrhoea. Asthma. Leucorrhoea.

Indigenous in Tasmania and Australia. Trees. Extensively planted, throughout the district.

33. **Fragaria vesca** Linn. (Rosaceae)  
English : Strawberries.  
Part used : Ripe fruits.  
Uses : Urticaria. Removes tartar from teeth.

Native to Europe. Herbs. Grown to a limited extent for the fruits.

34. **Hedera helix** Linn. (Araliaceae)  
English : Ivy.  
Part used : Young shoots.  
Uses : Cataract. Hydrocephalus. Rickets.

Native to alpine Europe. An extensive climber with dimorphic leaves; cultivated in gardens.

35. **Helianthus annuus** Linn. (Compositae)  
English : Sun flower.  
Part used : Mature flower heads and ripe seeds.  
Uses : Intermittent fevers. Nasal haemorrhage.

Native to America. Cultivated ornamentally.

36. **Iberis amara** Linn. (Papilionaceae)  
English : Bitter Candytuft.  
Part used : Seeds.  
Uses : Cardiac diseases. Hypertrophy of heart. Cardiac dyspnoea.

Native to Europe. Herbs with white flowers. Cultivated in gardens.

37. **Jasmiun officinale** Linn. (Oleaceae)  
English : Poet's Jasmine.  
Part used : Red berries.  
Uses : Convulsions. Tetanus.

Native to North West Himalayas, Persia to China.  
Flowers fragrant, climber. Planted in hedges.

38. **Lactuca sativa** Linn. (Compositae)  
English : Lettuce.  
Part used : Whole plant.  
Uses : Dropsy of the chest. Ascites.  
Impotency. Tickling cough.  
Promotes milk production.

Native of South Europe and West Asia. A herb  
with yellow flowers, cultivated.

39. **Lycopersicon lycopersicum** (Linn.) Karsten (Solanaceae)  
= *Lycopersicon esculentum* Mill.  
English : Tomato  
Part used : Whole plant. Ripe fruit.  
Uses : Backache. Deltiod Rheumatism. Diabetes. Diarrhoea.  
Gout. Headache. Obesity.

Native to Peru and Ecuador. Cultivated in lower  
areas for fruits.

40. **Magnolia grandiflora** Linn. (Magnoliaceae)  
English : Bull Bay. Tree Lotus.  
Part used : Flowers.  
Uses : Angina pectoris. Endocarditis.  
Pericarditis. Rheumatism  
associated with cardiac lesions.

Native of South Eastern United States. A tree  
with dull white flowers.

41. **Majorana hortensis** Moench. (Labiatae)  
= *Origanum majorana* Linn.  
English : Sweet marjoram.  
Uses : Breast affections. Nymphomania with impulse to run.  
Erotomania. Leucorrhoea.

Native of South Europe, North Africa and Asia  
Minor. Aromatic herb. Cultivated.

42. **Manihot esculenta** Crantz (Euphorbiaceae)  
= *M. utilissima* Pohl  
English : Cassava.  
Part used : Roots.  
Uses : Gastric disorders. Diarrhoea.  
Vomiting. Sleepiness.

Native to Brazil. Shrubs. Cultivated for edible  
tubers in lower elevations.

43. **Mentha piperata** Linn. (Labiatae)  
English : Peppermint  
Part used : Whole plant.  
Uses : Infantile colic. Biliary colic.  
Herpes Zoster. Dry cough.  
Hoarseness.

Native to Europe. Strongly scented perennial  
herb. Cultivated to a small extent.

44. **Mentha spicata** Linn. (Labiatae)  
= *M. viridis* Linn.  
English : Spearmint.  
Part used : Whole plant.  
Uses : Frequent micturition.

Native to Europe. A perennial herb creeping  
rhizomes; cultivated.

45. **Myristica fragrans** Houtt. (Myristicaceae)  
English : Nutmeg & Mace.  
Part used : Seeds and aril.  
Uses : Elephantiasis. Suppuration of  
joints. Whitlow.

Native of Moluccas. Trees. Cultivated in lower  
elevations.

46. **Ornithogalum umbellatum** Linn. (Liliaceae)  
English : Star of Bethlehem.  
Part used : Whole plant.  
Uses : Cancer of intestinal tract.  
Vomiting of coffee ground  
substance.

Native of Europe, Britain and North America.  
Succulent, grown as an ornamental in gardens.

47. **Oenothera biennis** Linn. (Onagraceae)  
English : Evening Primrose.  
Part used : Whole plant.  
Uses : Cholera infantum. Diarrhoea.  
Hydrocephaloid condition.

Native to Europe and America. Large erect  
herbs with yellow flowers.

48. **Parthenium hysterophorus** Linn. (Compositae)  
Part used : Whole plant.  
Uses : Abortion. Amenorrhoea.  
Cheyne-Stokes breathing.  
Spleen Diseases. Syncope.  
Malarial fever.

Native of South America. Now a pan-tropical weed throughout India.

49. **Pastinaca sativa** Linn. (Umbelliferae)  
English : Parsnip.  
Part used : Roots.  
Uses : Delirium tremens. Intolerance of milk. Loquacity.

Native to Central Europe. An erect herb. Cultivated in kitchen gardens.

50. **Petroselinum crispum** (Mill.)Nyman (Umbelliferae)

= *Apium petroselinum* Linn.

= *Carum petroselinum* (Linn.) Benth. & Hook.

English : Parsley.  
Part used : Whole plant.  
Uses : Piles. Gonorrhoea. Urinary infections.

Native to Europe. A herb. Cultivated to a limited extent.

51. **Polygonum fagopyrum** Linn. (Polygonaceae)

(= *Fagopyrum esculentum* Moench)

English : Buckwheat.  
Part used : Whole plant.  
Uses : Amenorrhoea. Metrorrhagia.  
Haemorrhoids. Varicosis.  
Ulcers & Sores.

Native to Central Asia. Herbs. Cultivated for fodder.

52. **Prunus persica** (Linn) Batsch. (Rosaceae)

= *Amygdalus persica* Linn.

English : Peach.  
Part used : Flowers.  
Uses : Ischuria. Haematuria. Vomiting.  
Morning sickness.

Native to China. Trees. Cultivated for their fruits.

53. **Punica granatum** Linn. (Punicaceae)

English : Pomegranate.  
Part used : Root bark.  
Uses : Vermifuge. Salivation.  
Nausea. Vertigo.

Native to Iran. Trees. Cultivated for their fruits.

54. **Quercus robur** Linn. (Fagaceae)

English : Oak.  
Part used : Acorns.  
Uses : Alcoholism. Offensive breath.  
Constipation. Diarrhoea. Fistula. Gout. Spleen affections.

55. **Quillaja saponaria** Molina (Rosaceae)

English : Soap bark.  
Part used : Bark.  
Uses : Acute Catarrh. Sneezing. Sore throat. Cough with difficult expectoration.

Native to Chile and Peru. Few trees found in gardens.

56. **Ricinus communis** Linn. (Euphorbiaceae)

English : Palma Christi.  
Part used : Seeds. Oil.  
Uses : Vertigo. Nausea & Vomiting.  
Incessant Diarrhoea.

Probably native to Africa. Small trees. Scarcely cultivated; found as escapes.

57. **Robinia pseudo-acacia** Linn. (Papilionaceae)

English : Tree Locust.  
Part used : Root Bark. Young twigs.  
Seeds.  
Uses : Gastric Headache. Flatulent colic. Nymphomania. Foetid Leucorrhoea. Herpes. Acid eructations.

Native to America and Europe. Trees with yellow flowers. Planted in gardens.

58. **Rosa damascena** Mill. (Rosaceae)

English : Damascus Rose.  
Part used : Flowers.  
Uses : HayFever. Eustachian Catarrh.

Native to the Middle East. Strongly armed shrubs, cultivated in gardens.

59. **Rosmarinus officinalis** Mill. (Labiatae)  
English : Rosemary.  
Part used : Whole plant.  
Uses : Too early menses. Abortion.  
Drowsiness. Memory deficient.  
Baldness.

Native to mediterranean region. Shrubs. Cultivated for essential oil.

60. **Salvia officinalis** Linn. (Labiatae)  
English : Sage.  
Part used : Whole plant.  
Uses : Phthisis. Galactorrhoea.  
Tickling cough.

Native to mediterranean region. Herbs. Cultivated to a small extent.

61. **Sarothamnus scoparius** (Linn.) W.D.J. Koch (Papilionaceae)  
=*Cytisus scoparius* Linn.  
English : Broom.  
Part used : Whole plant.  
Uses : Strengthens heart. Reduces B.P. Diuretic.

Native to Western Europe. Naturalized in America. Extensively naturalized in the Nilgiris. Shrub with yellow flowers above 5,500 ft.

62. **Schinus molle** Linn. (Anacardiaceae)  
English : Peruvian Mastic Tree.  
Californian Pepper Tree.  
Parts used : Leaves and berries.  
Uses : Diarrhoea. Liver affections.  
Dryness of Oesophagus.  
Vomiting.

Native to Tropical South America. Trees with fragrant leaves. Planted in a few places.

63. **Senecio bicolor** (Willd.) Tod. (DC.) Chater. subsp. *Cineraria* (Compositae)  
=*S. cineraria* DC.  
=*Cineraria maritima* Linn.  
English : Dusty Miller.  
Part used : Whole plant.  
Uses : Cure of cataract and corneal opacities. Trauma of eyes.

Native to Europe. Subshrubs with cottony-white stem and leaves, golden yellow heads. Cultivated to a large extent.

64. **Silybum marianum** (Linn.) Gaertn. (Compositae)  
=*Carduus marianus* Linn.  
English : Holy Thistle.  
Parts used : Seeds.  
Uses : Liver diseases. Jaundice.  
Varicose veins. Varicose ulcers. Miners' Asthma. Dropsy associated with liver diseases.

65. **Solanum pseudocapsicum** Linn. (Solanaceae)  
English : Jerusalem Cherry.  
Part used : Fruits.  
Uses : Nausea. Pain in abdomen.  
Somnolence. Dilatation of pupils.

Native of Central Europe. Shrubs with white flowers and dark red-orange maturing fruits. Well naturalized.

66. **Thebroma cacao** Linn. (Sterculiaceae)  
English : Cocoa.  
Part used : Beans (Seeds).  
Uses : Nervous excitement. Increased pulse.

Native of Central and South America. Trees. Cultivated in lower elevations.

67. **Trifolium repens** Linn. (Papilionaceae)  
English : Dutch/White Clover.  
Parts used : Whole plant.  
Uses : Mumps. Increased salivation.

Native to Europe, North Africa, Western Asia & North America. Creeping herbs with whitish heads. Common among grasses.

68. **Tropaeolum majus** Linn. (Tropaeolaceae)  
English : Garden Nasturtium/Climbing Nasturtium.  
Part used : Whole plant.  
Uses : Foetid urine with urinary complaints.

Native to South America. Climbing herbs with scarlet red, orange or yellow flowers. Cultivated but also runs wild.

69. **Verbascum thapsus** Linn. (Scrophulariaceae)  
English : Great Moth Mullein, Hag  
Taper, Aaron's Torch.  
Part used : Whole plant. Flowers.  
Uses : Neuralgia of Zygoma. Otagia.  
Deafness. Enuresis.

Indigenous in Europe and Asia. Tall, woolly  
herbs with yellow flowers. Common in fallow fields.

70. **Viola odorata** Linn. (Violaceae)  
English : Sweet Violet.  
Part used : Whole plant.  
Uses : Burning of the forehead.  
Hysterical attacks in tubercular  
patients. Otorrhoea. Dyspnoea  
during pregnancy. Milky  
urine.

Native to Europe. Herbs with rootstocks. Flow-  
ers violet, tinged purple. Cultivated in gardens.

71. **Viola tricolor** Linn. (Violaceae)  
English : Pansy. Heart's Ease.  
Part used : Whole plant.  
Uses : Eczema of scalp. Impetigo.

Native to Europe. Cultivated in gardens. Flow-  
ers red, yellow, violet, purple or pinkish in various combi-  
nations.

72. **Xanthium spinosum** Linn. (Compositae)  
Part used : Whole plant.  
Uses : Specific for hydrophobia.  
Chronic Cystitis in women.

Native to South America. Recent entrant in  
South India. Rare in sandy places.

73. **Zingiber officinale** Roscoe. (Zingiberaceae)  
English : Ginger.  
Part used : Rhizomes.  
Uses : Debility of the digestive  
system. Colic. Diarrhoea.  
Asthma. Cramps in soles and  
palms.

Native to South East Asia. Cultivated in lower  
elevations.

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