

Herbal medicine is considered as the oldest form of medicines.

Herbal Medicine is the oldest form of medicine and has at one time been the dominant healing therapy throughout all cultures and the peoples of the world. The first examples of the use of herbs as medicines date back to the very dawn of mankind. Archaeologists have found many evidences of the use of herbs by Neanderthal man in Iraq some sixty thousand years ago. All of the ancient civilizations – the Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Greek, Chinese, Indian and Roman used herbs as an integral part of their various medical systems. The first famous [Herbalist](#), who stressed the importance of nature in healing, was Hippocrates, known as the “Father of Medicine”.

It is on the long and continuous history of herbs as medicine, together with knowledge taken from modern scientific research, that today’s herbalism is based.

The Philippine Institute of Traditional an Alternative Health Care has approved the 10 most common [herbal medicines](#) and as approved by the Department of Health.

Acapulpo. Scientific Name- Cassia Alata

It Contains chrysophic acid, a fungicide and saponin, a laxative.

Uses

1. Treatment of skin dideases such as insect bites, ringworm, eczema, scabies and itchiness
2. Expectorant for bronchitis and dyspnea
3. alleviation of asthma symptom
4. Diuretic and purgative
5. Laxative to expel intestinal parasites and other stomach problems
6. Ampalaya or Bitter Melon. Scientific Name- Momordica Charantia

Herbal medicine known to cure Diabetes (flavanoids and alkaloids). It is good source of Vitamins A, B, and C, iron, folic acid, phosphorous and calcium.

Ampalaya

Scientific Name- Mormordica Charantia

1. Good for rheumatism and gout
2. Good for diseases of spleen and liver
3. Aids in lowering blood sugar levels
4. Helps in lowering blood pressure
5. Relieves headaches
6. Disinfects and heals wounds and burns

7. Can be used as cough and fever remedy
8. Treatment of intestinal worms, diarrhea
9. Helps prevent some types of cancer
10. Enhances immune system to fight infection
11. It is an antioxidant, parasiticide, antibacterial and antipyretic
12. Garlic. Scientific Name- *Allium Sativum*

An antibacterial compound known as Allicin. It is known as nature's antibiotic. Its juices inhibits the growth of fungal and viruses thus prevents viral, yeast and viral infections.

Preliminary test also shows some positive results in the treatment of AIDS.

Garlic

Scientific Name- *Allium Sativum*

1. Helps lower bad cholesterol level (LDL)
2. Aids in lowering blood pressure
3. Remedy for arteriosclerosis
4. May help prevent certain types of cancer
5. Boosts immune system to fight infection
6. With antioxidant properties
7. Relieves sore throat, toothache

Guava

Scientific Name- *Psidium Guajava*

The fresh leaves are used to facilitate the healing wounds and cuts. A decoction or infusion of fresh leaves can be used for wound cleaning to prevent infection. Guava is also effective for toothache.

Uses

1. Antiseptic, astringent and antihelmintic
2. Kills bacteria, fungi and amoeba
3. Used to treat diarrhea on children
4. For hypertension, diabetes and asthma
5. Promotes menstruation

Lagundi

Scientific Name- *Vitex Nigundo*

It prevents the body's production of leukotricnes which are released during an asthma attack. It contains Chrysoplenol D. It is a substance with anti-histamine properties and

muscle relaxant. The leaves, flowers, seeds and roots of Lagundi can all be used as herbal medicine.

Uses

1. Relief asthma and pharyngitis
2. Recommendes relief of rheumatism, dyspepsia, boils, diarrhea
3. Treatment of cough, colds, fever, and flu and other bronchopulmonary disorders
4. Alleviate symptoms of Chiken Pox
5. Removal of worms

Sambong

Scientific Name- Blumea Balsamifera

Uses

1. Good as a diuretic agent (antiurolithiasis)
2. Effective in the dissolving kidney stones
3. Aids in treating hypertension and rheumatism
4. Treatment of colds and fever
5. Anti-diarrhetic and Anti-gastralgic properties
6. Helps remove worms, boils
7. Treats dysentery and sore throat

Wild Tea

Scientific name- Ehretia Microphylla

Now available in capsules and tea bags.

Uses

1. Stomach pains (antispasmodic)
2. Treats gastroenteritis
3. Good for Intestinal motility
4. Treats dysentery
5. Good for diarrhea or loose Bowel Movement (LBM)
6. Use as mouth gargle due to high in fluoride content
7. Use as body cleanser/wash

Yerba Buena

Scientific name- Mentha Spicata

The word Yerba Buena came from the Spanish word means “good herb”

It consumed for centuries as tea and herbal medicines as a pain reliever (analgesic)

Uses

1. Arthritis
2. Head aches
3. Tooth aches
4. Mouth wash
5. Relief of intestinal gas
6. Stomach aches
7. Indigestion
8. Drink as tea for general good health

Niyog-Niyogan

Scientific Name- *Quisqualis indica*

Its common name- Tartaraok, (Tagalog), Balitadham, (Visaya), and Rangoon creeper, Chinese honey suckle, liane vermifuge, yesterday and tomorrow.

- Indications and preparations: Fruit(kernel) antihelmintic; leaves poultice for headache

Uses

1. Roots, seeds, fruit decoction- used as vermifuge, stops diarrhea
2. It alleviates nephritis
3. Remedy for boils, and ulcers
4. Relieves ache caused by fever
5. Treats rheumatism
6. Used as mouth gargle against toothache

Ulasimang Bato

Scientific Name- *Peperomia pellucida*

Anti hyperuricemia (Arthritis and gout)

Tips on Handling Medicinal Plants

- If possible, buy herbs that are grown organically, without pesticides
- Medicinal parts of the plants are best harvested on sunny mornings. Avoid picking leaves, fruits or nuts during and heavy rainfall.

- Leaves, fruits, flowers or nuts must be mature before harvesting. Less medicinal substances are found on young parts.
- Store plant parts in sealed plastic bags or brown bottles in a cool dry place without sunlight preferably with a moisture absorbent material like charcoal. Leaves and other parts that are prepared properly, well-dried and stored can be used up six months
- Decoctions lose potency after some time. Dispose of decoctions after one day. To keep fresh during the day, keep lukewarm in flask or thermos.
- Always consult with a doctor if symptom persists or if any sign of allergies

SOURCE: <http://healthmad.com/alternative/10-most-common-herbal-medicines-in-the-philippines/#ixzz1TNyNnk6X>

Ten (10) Herbal Medicines in the Philippines Approved by the Department of Health (DOH)

Here are the the ten (10) medicinal plants that the Philippine Department of Health (DOH) through its "Traditional Health Program" have endorsed. All ten (10) herbs have been thoroughly tested and have been clinically proven to have medicinal value in the relief and treatment of various ailments:

1. **Akapulko** (*Cassia alata*) - also known as "bayabas-bayabasan" and "ringworm bush" in English, this herbal medicine is used to treat ringworms and skin fungal infections.
2. **Ampalaya** (*Momordica charantia*) - known as "bitter gourd" or "bitter melon" in English, it most known as a treatment of diabetes (diabetes mellitus), for the non-insulin dependent patients.
3. **Bawang** (*Allium sativum*) - popularly known as "garlic", it mainly reduces cholesterol in the blood and hence, helps control blood pressure.
4. **Bayabas** (*Psidium guajava*) - "guava" in English. It is primarily used as an antiseptic, to disinfect wounds. Also, it can be used as a mouth wash to treat tooth decay and gum infection.
5. **Lagundi** (*Vitex negundo*) - known in English as the "5-leaved chaste tree". It's main use is for the relief of coughs and asthma.
6. **Niyog-niyogan** (*Quisqualis indica L.*) - is a vine known as "Chinese honey suckle". It is effective in the elimination of intestinal worms, particularly the Ascaris and Trichina. Only the dried matured seeds are medicinal -crack and ingest the dried seeds two hours after eating (5 to 7 seeds for children & 8 to 10 seeds for adults). If one dose does not eliminate the worms, wait a week before repeating the dose.
7. **Sambong** (*Blumea balsamifera*)- English name: Blumea camphora. A diuretic that helps in the excretion of urinary stones. It can also be used as an edema.
8. **Tsaang Gubat** (*Ehretia microphylla Lam.*) - Prepared like tea, this herbal medicine is effective in treating intestinal motility and also used as a mouth wash since the leaves of this shrub has high fluoride content.
9. **Ulasimang Bato | Pansit-Pansitan** (*Peperomia pellucida*) - It is effective in fighting arthritis and gout. The leaves can be eaten fresh (about a cupful) as salad or like tea. For the decoction, boil a cup of clean chopped leaves in 2 cups of water. Boil for 15 to 20 minutes. Strain, let cool and drink a cup after meals (3 times day).
10. **Yerba Buena** (*Clinopodium douglasii*) - commonly known as Peppermint, this vine is used as an analgesic to relive body aches and pain. It can be taken internally as a

decoction or externally by pounding the leaves and applied directly on the afflicted area.

Tips on Handling Medicinal Plants / Herbs:

- If possible, buy herbs that are grown organically - without pesticides.
- Medicinal parts of plants are best harvested on sunny mornings. Avoid picking leaves, fruits or nuts during and after heavy rainfall.
- Leaves, fruits, flowers or nuts must be mature before harvesting. Less medicinal substances are found on young parts.
- After harvesting, if drying is required, it is advisable to dry the plant parts either in the oven or air-dried on screens above ground and never on concrete floors.
- Store plant parts in sealed plastic bags or brown bottles in a cool dry place without sunlight preferably with a moisture absorbent material like charcoal. Leaves and other plant parts that are prepared properly, well-dried and stored can be used up to six months.

Tips on Preparation for Intake of Herbal Medicines:

- Use only half the dosage prescribed for fresh parts like leaves when using dried parts.
- Do not use stainless steel utensils when boiling decoctions. Only use earthen, enamelled, glass or alike utensils.
- As a rule of thumb, when boiling leaves and other plant parts, do not cover the pot, and boil in low flame.
- Decoctions lose potency after some time. Dispose of decoctions after one day. To keep fresh during the day, keep lukewarm in a flask or thermos.
- Always consult with a doctor if symptoms persist or if any sign of allergic reaction develops.

SOURCE: http://www.philippineherbalmedicine.org/doh_herbs.htm

10 Highly Endorsed Herbal Plants in the Philippines

The Philippines, a country of more than 7,000 islands, is blessed with rare, exotic flowering plants and more than 500 medicinal plants. With alternative medicine gaining some popularity, the Philippine government through proper government agencies and private organizations have done extensive researches and studies in search for traditional plants doubling as medicinal plants. Following is a compilation of 10 medicinal or herbal plants duly approved by the Philippine Department of Health (DOH) as productive sources for alternative medicine.

1. **Bitter Gourd** (Ampalaya) – *Momordica charantia*



[Image source](#)

Well-known for its bitter edible fruit, Ampalaya is a herbaceous, climbing vine growing up to five meters. The plant has heart-shaped leaves and bears green oblong-shaped fruits. Leaves, fruits and roots are used in treating several health disorders.

Medicinal Uses:

- Juice extracted from leaves is effective in easing cough, pneumonia, healing wounds, and combating intestinal parasites.
- Juice from fruits aids in treating dysentery and chronic colitis.
- Decoction of roots and seeds is effective in treating hemorrhoids, rheumatism, abdominal pain, psoriasis,

and urethral discharges.

- Pounded leaves used for eczema, jaundice, and scalds.
- Decoction of leaves is effective for fevers.

Recent studies have suggested that the bitter fruit contains plant insulin, helpful for its blood sugar lowering effect. Ampalaya is recommended for diabetic individuals to take.

2. Ringworm Bush (Akapulko) – *Cassia alata*



[image source](#)

An erect, shrubby legume reaching 6 ft tall, Akapulko grows throughout the Philippines. It has dark green leaves and yellow-orange flowers, producing as much as 50 to 60 small, triangular seeds. For medicinal purposes, leaves, flowers and seeds are used.

Medicinal Uses:

- Decoction of leaves and flowers is very effective in easing asthma, cough and bronchitis.
- The seeds are effective in expelling intestinal parasites.
- Juice from leaves aids in controlling fungal infections like; eczema, athlete's foot, ringworm, scabies, and herpes.
- Pounded leaves reduce injury-related swellings, treat insect bites, and ease rheumatism.
- Leaves and flowers concoction used as mouthwash in treating stomatitis.
- Juice from leaves ease fetid discharges.
- The leaves stain is an effective purgative.

3. Garlic (Bawang) - *Allium sativum*



[image source](#)

Garlic is a low herb with flat and linear leaves growing to about 30 to 60 cm tall. Garlic is commercially grown in the Philippine provinces of Batangas, Cotabato, Ilocos Norte, Mindoro and Nueva Ecija. Leaves, bulbs, lobes are used for medical purposes.

Medicinal Uses:

- Massaging crushed lobe to both temples can ease headache.
- Rubbing crushed lobe to affected areas is a good remedy for insect bites and athlete's foot.
- Decoction of leaves and bulbs is effective for fever, tonsillitis, and digestive problems.
- Juice from crushed garlic is used to treat colds, cough, sore throat, bronchitis, and asthma.

4. Guava (Bayabas) - *Psidium guajava*



[Image source](#)

The guava is a perennial shrub growing to about 25 ft. tall at maturity. It has oval to oblong leaves and bears white flowers, developing into green fruits that turns yellow in color when ripe. A common backyard plant, Bayabas is grown throughout the Philippines. The edible fruit is a good source of Vitamin C. The leaves are used for treating certain health problems.

Medicinal Uses:

- As cleaning agent, decoction of fresh leaves prevents infection in wounds.
- Also, decoction of leaves is effective for diarrhea and skin ulcers.
- Boiled fresh leaves are good ingredients for aromatic baths.
- Chewing fresh leaves help control gum swelling.
- Placing tightly roll leaves into the nasal tract can stop nosebleeds.

5. Five-leaved chaste tree (Lagundi) - *Vitex negundo*



[Image source](#)

Lagundi is a small erect tree that can reach 3meter at maturity. The plant has evergreen leaves, blue flowers about 6-7 mm that develop into fruits about 4mm in diameter. Leaves, seeds, bark and roots are used for the treatment of various illnesses.

Medicinal Uses:

- Decoction of leaves is effective for cough, colds, fever, headache, toothache, asthma, menstrual difficulties and amenorrhea.
- As washing agent, boiled leaves are used for sponge bathing, treating wounds and ulcer.
- Placing ash of fresh leaves in affected areas can ease rheumatic joints.
- Decoction of leaves taken as a diuretic.

6. Chinese honeysuckle (Niyog-niyogan) - *Quisqualis indica*



[Image source](#)

Niog-niogan is a perennial climbing shrub growing to about 2.5-8 meters at maturity. It has egg-shaped leaves, aromatic flowers that may come in white to purple orange in color. The oval-shaped fruit can reach 30-35 mm long when ripe. For medicinal purposes leaves, seeds and roots are used.

Medicinal Uses:

- Dried seeds, when eaten, act as deworming agents.
- Roasted seeds help control diarrhea and fever.
- Boiled leaves used to check difficulty in urinating
- Fruit decoction of fruit, taken as mouthwash, is effective against nephritis.
- Juice made from leaves are used in the treatment of ulcers, boils, and fever-induced headache.
- Decoctions of roots aids in reducing pain due to rheumatism.
- Pounded leaves are used externally for skin diseases.

7. Shiny Bush (Pansit-pansitan) - *Peperomia pellucida*



[Image source](#)

Pansit-pansitan is a small, fleshy herb (about 40 cm tall), which grows in yards, nooks and other damp areas. The plant have green, heart-shaped leaves, fleshy stems that produce tiny flowers on a spike. The small, oblong-shaped fruits turn to black when ripe. Parts uses are leaves and stems.

Medical Uses:

- Fresh juice made from stem and leaves controls eye inflammation.
- Crushed whole plant as warm poultice, is effective for pimples, boils, and wound.
- Concoction of leaves used in treating fevers, headaches, sore throats, coughs, common colds, and diarrheas.
- Boiled leaves and stems is used for gout, arthritis, rheumatic pains, and conjunctivitis. The mixture is also effective in controlling high blood pressure.
- Juice made from leaves and stem, taken externally, is a good facial wash for skin problems.

8. *Blumea camphora* (Sambong) – *Blumea balsamifera*



http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/ms/d/d5/Blumea_balsamifera.jpg">Image source

Sambong is a tall, erect, shrub that grows in grasslands, open fields, waste areas. This strongly aromatic herb with elongated leaves, and yellow flowers can reach 4 meters tall at maturity. Leaves are used to treat certain medical conditions.

Medicinal uses:

- Decoction of leaves is effective against fever, kidney problems and cystitis.
- Leaves is used as poultice for abscesses.
- Concoction of leaves is used for sore throat, rheumatic pains, stomach pains, and dysentery.
- Fresh juice made from leaves is applied to wounds and cuts.
- As expectorant, Sambong tea is used for colds.

9. Fukien tea tree (Tsaang Gubat): - *Ehretia microphylla* Lam



[Image source](#)

Grown throughout the Philippines, Tsaang Gubat is a shrub growing to about 5 m tall. Leaves grow in clusters with rough jagged edge towards the tip. The plant bears white flowers that developed into a fleshy, yellow-orange fruits when ripe. Leaves are used for medicinal purposes.

Medicinal Uses:

- Tea extracted from leaves is taken to ease stomach aches, diarrheas, and dysentery.
- Decoction of leaves is effective as dental mouthwash.
- Leaves concoction is used to stop bleeding cause by snakebites, and a cure for plant-based poisoning;
- Decoction of leaves is also used as body cleanser after childbirth.

10. Mint (Yerba Buena) - *Clinopodium douglasii*



[Image source](#)

Yerba Buena is a perennial plant of the mint family that grows up to 1 meter long. Leaves are elliptic in shape, and produces small, hairy whitish, or purplish flowers. In the Philippines, Yerba Buena is grown in high elevated areas. As medicinal plant, the parts used are leaves and stem.

Medical Uses:

- Promotes good health, if taken as tea.
- Sniffing crushed fresh leaves is effective for dizziness.
- Leaves soak in a glass of water is used as mouthwash.
- Decoction of leaves is used for migraine, headaches, fevers, toothaches, stomach aches, muscles and joint pains, and dysmenorrhea.
- Pounded or crushed leaves is used to treat insect bites.

Source: <http://factoidz.com/10-highly-endorsed-herbal-plants-in-the-philippines/>