

An Overview of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants

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EDITORIAL

Medicinal & Aromatic Plants (MAPs) are botanical raw materials, also known as herbal drugs that are mostly utilized for therapeutic, aromatic and/or culinary purposes as components of cosmetics, health, medicinal products and other natural health products. Medicinal and aromatic plants constitute a significant segment of the flora, which provides raw materials for use in the pharmaceuticals, beauty care products, and drug industries.

The difference between medicinal plants and aromatic plants, Medicinal plants also known as medicinal herbs, which can be defined as the plants that possess therapeutic properties or exert beneficial pharmacological effect on the human or animal body. Aromatic plants provide products with are extensively used as spices, flavoring agents and in perfumes and medicine. In addition, they also provide raw materials for the production of many important industrial chemicals.

Plants with medicinal or aromatic properties that are utilized in pharmacy and/or perfumery are usually defined as medicinal and aromatic plants; however, medicinal, aromatic and cosmetic plants would be a better term as many medicinal and aromatic plants are also utilized in cosmetics. Aromatic plants are those that contain aromatic compounds – basically essential oils that are volatile at room temperature. These essential oils are odorous, volatile, hydrophobic and highly concentrated compounds. They will be obtained from flowers, buds, seeds, leaves, twigs, bark, wood, fruits and roots. Essential oils are complex mixtures of secondary metabolites comprised low-boiling-point phenylpropenes and terpenes. Essential oils have characteristic flavour and fragrance properties, possess biological activities and are widely applied in aromatherapy and healthcare additionally to many industries

like cosmetics, flavoring and fragrance, spices, pesticides and repellents, also as herbal beverages. The essential oils which are being produced in India are oils of lemon grass, mentha, citronella, ajwain, celery seed, eucalyptus, Palmarosa, cedar wood, spearmints, patchouli, turpentine and votive.

Medicinal plants have been the basis of treatment of various diseases in traditional medicine. Most of the potent medicinal plants have relatively no toxic or adverse effects when used by humans. The significance of medicinal and aromatic plants was the mixtures in medicinal and aromatic plants retain human health until present, such as medicine, food, healing, and recreation. One of the colossal advantages from medicinal and aromatic plants was to overcome many difficult illnesses, such as contagious disease, cancer and AIDS/HIV.

Herbal medicines continue to play a significant role in avoiding and treating viral respiratory infections. Here, herbs for treating such infections will be considered first, including both traditional treatments and those that have been scientifically researched. Then, research-based preventative measures will be discussed. These measures are particularly important to provide clinicians with evidence-based alternatives to antibiotics, which have no place in the treatment of purely viral infections. Various plant families, particularly *Lamiaceae*, *Apiaceae* and *Zinziberaceae* have been investigated in depth for their medicinal value due to their significant antioxidant properties. The medicinal plants *Senegalia visco*, *Artemisia nilagirica*, *Vaccinium microcarpum*, *Hypericum perforatum*, and *Curcuma longa* are a few samples of plants that have been effectively used against skin diseases. They provided us with bioactive molecules, such as lupeol, artemetin, hydroquinone, hypericin, epicatechin, and curcumin, which are used against acne, atopic dermatitis, skin cancer, and skin pigmentation disorders.

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