

ENRE TOPIC PAGE : Medicinal Plants

[No.4 out of 12 topics] September.2003

ENRE (Ecology and Natural Resource Education) is one of the project of DRCSC (Development Research Communication and Services Centre), a non-profit organization assisting local farmers, women & youth and acting as a resource centre on various environment & development related issues.

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Welcome to 'TOPIC PAGE', an extract of case studies by children's groups affiliated to ENRE network group (on various natural resources and their management) conducted. Each group has been actively working for last 2-3 years, according to the model lesson plans provided by ENRE. In associating with partner organizations, ENRE project has created a teachers & children's network who care about environment and community life.

If you use some of the activities described here in your school/group, please let us know how the learners you work with enjoyed working on the topic, and what did they discover ?

The complete content of selected topic related activities is available as 'Selection from Basbhumi(habitat)' booklet. Please contact us!



Children study about medicinal plants and their use in own locality. They evaluate indigenous technology & knowledge to grow and use medicinal plants by themselves_

India has more than 25,000 species of vascular plants, of which 7,500-8,000 are known to be used in home remedies and various traditional system of medicine. Medicinal plants are valuable both for health care and as source of livelihood, especially in rural areas. The study of medicinal plants and the indigenous knowledge & technology associated with their utilization are important topic for raising environmental awareness. Children are encouraged to collect information from various sources to analyze current situation, then they are involved in growing some plants or carefully observe plants growing naturally. Some children can even make herbal medicines or cosmetics.

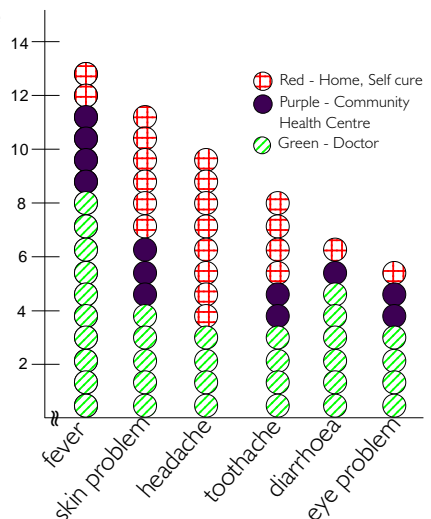
Step 1 (Preparatory work)

Children survey common diseases and home remedies, and.....

To raise children's interest and to know about how much children are familiar with medicinal plants, children are asked to list up all the ailments & diseases they suffered from during last 6 months and their remedies. They make ranking for com-

mon diseases for which home remedies are used. According to Swarnirvar group, Top 3 problems were 'cough & cold', 'diarrhea' and 'cuts & wounds'. They collected their experience of self/home cure

remedies, for each dis-
eases. They have used leaf of Vasaka/ Basil/ Bael / Indian Sorrel and Ginger for 'cough and cold', Indian Penny Wort (Thankuni)/ Physic Nut for 'diarrhea', Marigold/ Neem for 'Cuts & wounds'.



Other groups of children walked around school yard /surroundings and collected plants which they had used as medicine and made a profile of each plant. 11 students of Hinch village from Kajla group made a summary chart using dried leaves of 23 commonly used medicinal plants.



Step 2 (Review & Make sure)

Children have discussion together on what they have learnt from preparatory work and what questions they would like to investigate further, and...

If children express their doubt regarding the effectiveness of using medicinal plants, it is good opportunity for both teachers and children to have discussion. First of all information collected during preparatory work should be summarized properly and tabulated / analysed. If any contradiction occurred, children are encouraged to compare each other's experience carefully and to collect further information from various sources too. Important thing is that Not everything 'old' has to be trusted (or ignored) blindly; but to make children realize that those traditional home remedies which have prevented sickness & treated ailments of millions of people over hundreds of years merit investigation. This becomes good platform for next step activities.



If, you were the teacher, what would you do ?

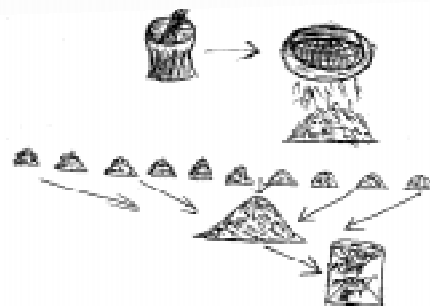


Sir, my grandmother treated with guava leaf when I had toothache, but it didn't work at all. I think herbal remedy is useless.

myriobalan, Clove, Cinnamon, Cardamom, flakes of Betel Nut, Catechu, Pepper, Babla leaf, Neem leaf, bark of Arjun, Guava leaf), and it was excellent tooth powder! they have made also 'Bhaskar Lavan' which is traditional digestive & appetizer. Their products and demonstration in ENRE Eco-work Exhibition (Jan,2003) inspired many other children and teachers who visited our exhibition.



[how we made herbal tooth powder]



Step 3 (Investigation/Project work)

Children take up activities for making herbal products or creating medicinal plants garden in their school yard, and....

Using the traditional knowledge which children gathered, to produce own herbal products becomes an interesting project work. Children from Swanirvar groups made Tooth powder (with dried Neem leaf, Pepper powder, & rock salt) and Body oil. Unfortunately they found their Tooth paste was too bitter, salty & spicy !! and their Body oil was very sticky !! Children of 'Herbal doctor', one of the groups from Kajla, also made Tooth Powder according own recipe using various ingredients (dried Ginger, Black

3 Children's groups in Fatullapur & Andharmanik village in North 24 Parganas district had set up vegetable and medicinal plants nurseries. Medicinal plants such as Vasaka, Kalmegh, and Aloe vera were planted as living fence of the vegetable garden. 75 students spread over the villages of Kajla, Hinchi, Bakshishpur & Dariapur in Midnapur district have also set up medicinal plants nursery in their villages.

Lastly Top 10 of the most commonly used medicinal plants identified through ENRE groups' survey were; **1. Vasaka, 2. Indian penny wort (Thankuni) & Neem, 3. Kalmegh, 4. Basil & Ginger, 5. Coral Jasmine (Shiuli), 6. Guava leaf, 7. Aloe, 8. Pineapple leaf, 9. Common Heliotrope (Hatisur) & Marigold, 10. Cumin, Shoe flower (Hibiscus), Indian Sorrel (Amuruli) & Biskhatari.**

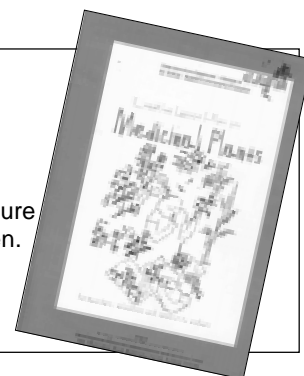
How about your area? Let's share more information and experience about medicinal plants..

☺ For further detail of the activity :

Booklet by ENRE project — Available Now !

'Selection from Basbhumii : booklet 4' for Activity-based Environmental Education
"Creative Lesson plan on MEDICINAL PLANTS – for teachers, educators and community workers"

contains a total of 4 activities and feedbacks of their application. Note by experts, a literature reference & future reading section, and a list of 30 Selected Medicinal Plants for children. 92 pages, Contributions towards printing cost Rs.30 / available both in English and Bengali, also available in exchange of EE materials & publications from your group / organizations. Please contact Us!



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