

## **Anti-inflammatory Plants Used in Sri Lanka**

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Inflammation in the body is the result of a disturbance or disease. For treating inflammation analgesic and anti-inflammatory drugs are commonly used. Some of these drugs can have side effects such as gastric or intestinal ulcerations that can cause secondary anaemia. Natural products from plants are increasingly being screened now for the synthesis of new generation anti-inflammatory drugs with less or no side effects and higher therapeutic value.

Among the native flora of Sri Lanka, there are well over 500 species that are used in traditional medicine. Apart from that, there are over 900 non-indigenous plants used in native medicine.

Of these, about 50 plant species belonging to 30 flowering plant families are reported as being used in treating some form of inflammation. Families such as Fabaceae, Malvaceae, Rubiaceae and Cucurbitaceae have the highest number of plants with anti-inflammatory properties. Preparations made from these plants are used to treat inflammations found in various parts of the body including legs, mouth, eyes, alimentary tract, urino-genital tract, skin and the mammary glands.

The populations of medicinal plants have been adversely affected by over-harvesting and lack of care for the habitat when collecting plants from the wild. Conservation of these plants is essential to secure the continued existence of these important medicinal plants and ensure their continued availability.