

## FOLKLORIC PLANT REMEDIES FOR STINGS OF INSECTS FROM THE TRIBALS OF THRISSUR DISTRICT, KERALA

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**ABSTRACT:** *The authors conducted survey of medicinal plants used by the tribal of Thrissur district. The investigation revealed several plant remedies to escape from the attack of insects and flies which are described in this paper. These could be used as soft common remedies in our households also.*

The immense wealth of medicinal plants in India is quite famous. The great science, Ayurveda developed from the observations on nature made by sages. People of tribal communities still depend upon the local flora and fauna for healing their illness. As they live in the jungle environment, they are exposed to many insects and flies, some of which are poisonous too. So, naturally, they had developed their own system to ward off such evils. Hence a probe was made into this aspect.

The *malayan* tribe of Thrissur District were selected for the study as they form the majority in population. Five localities from this District were selected based on the availability of informants and specimens. They were Chimminy, Marottichal, Vazhachal and Sholayar. The information was gathered from selected reliable informants from each locality. For this correct identification and future reference, voucher specimens were collected.

Information on twelve plants falling into this category was collected. They constitute common plants found around their dwellings. The major insects identified were honeybees, wasps, scorpions and centipedes. Instantly after attack, they apply

the handy remedies. The plants used and details about the mode of use are described below.

The data are presented in the following order: Latin Name; name of the family with in brackets; Vernacular name, locality and the mode of use.

*Agaricus campestris* (Linn.) Fr.  
(Agaricaceae) 'Koonmula', Sholayar

Mushroom arising from the excreta of elephants is made into a paste in the juice of a whole plant *Sphaeranthus indicus*. Pills made out of this are dried under shade and used for external application to scorpion sting.

*Amaranthus paniculatus* Linn.  
(Amaranthaceae) 'Arikeerai', Vazhachal

Leaves made into a paste and applied over wasp sting. An equal quantity of the paste is also swallowed.

*Cassia tora* Linn. (Fabaceae)  
'Thakarachappu', Sholayar, Vazhani.

A paste of the leaves with raw turmeric is applied as poultice over honeybee or wasp sting.

*Citrus aurantifolia* (Christin) Swingle (Rutaceae) 'Cherunarangam', Vazhani

Fruit juice mixed with jaggery is applied for honey bee and wasp sting.

*Leucas aspera* Spreng. (Lamiaceae) 'Thumba', Vazhachal.

Leaf paste made with black pepper is applied for scorpion sting.

*Nyctanthes arbor-tristis* Linn. (Nyctaginaceae) 'Pavizhamalli', Vazhachal.

Juice extracted from leaves and stem bark is orally taken as well as externally applied over wounds in scorpion sting.

*Piper longum* Linn (Piperaceae) 'Thippali', Marottichal, Vazhani

A paste made with the berries along with the roots of *Aristolochia indica* is applied over eruptions caused by centepeds.

*Cocos nucifera* Linn. (Arecaceae) 'Thengu', Chimminy, Sholayar.

A paste of charcoal prepared out of the shell with turmeric is applied over skin eruptions caused by centepeds.

A paste of Jaggery in the lime water is applied over wasp or hone bee sting.

*Glycosmis pentaphylla* (Retz.) Correa (Rutaceae) 'Panal', Sholayar.

Leaves are crushed and rubbed over the body to repel honey bees.

Thus the Malayan people of the different tribal localities of Thrissur district have a good knowledge of the antidotes against the attack of allergic and poisonous insects and flies.