

Tanglad

Andropogon citratus

Common Names:

English: Ginger grass, lemon grass, sweet-rush

Ilocano: Baraniw

Spanish: Paja de Meca, Zacate lemon

Tagalog: Tanglad, salaid, salay

Visaya: Balioko

Folkloric uses:

- Diarrhea: Boil 10 leaves in 2 glasses of water for 10 minutes; add a tablespoon of sugar and one small piece of crushed ginger.
- **For adults:** 1 cup, 3 times daily and after each loose bowel movement.
- **Children:** (Babies) 1 tablespoon 3 times daily and after each loose bowel movement; 2-6 years, 1/4 cup 3 times daily and after each loose bowel movement; 7-12 years, 1/2 cup three times daily and after each loose bowel movement.
- **Suob:** One of the 10 herbal ingredients in the decoction/bath in the post-partum ritual of suob.
- **Culinary:** Commonly used as a stuffing ingredient in pig spit-roasting to improve the flavor and decrease the grease-taste.

"TANGLAD ANYONE...?"

Did you know that aside from its use as herbal medicine and condiment, Lemongrass or Tanglad (*Lemongrass lvs.*) is also very rich in beta-carotene?

Lemongrass is widely used in the Visayas and Bicol regions to add flavor to soups, especially beef and chicken nilaga; and other dishes like ginataang langka. An aromatic plant, Tanglad is also used to prepare tea and is used by some to relieve sore throat.

According to the Food and Nutrition Research Institute of the Department of Science and Technology "Food Composition Tables", every 100 grams of edible portion of Tanglad (boiled) contains 24205 ug (micrograms) of beta-carotene.

Beta-carotene as we all know is an antioxidant that scientists believe can prevent cancer.

Lemongrass (tanglad)

Nervousness/restlessness can be eased by this herb. Make tea by steeping two blades of leaves in a pot of boiling water. Sip slowly. Also good for dizziness, headaches and stress.

Should you feel feverish or like you're coming down with a cold, sip the tea slowly. Take it as often as you can until symptoms are eased.

As a relaxing bath, place some leaves or pour five cups of the tea in a bath tub of hot water. Soak for seven minutes.

Reference: "A Treasury of Natural First Aid Remedies From A-Z," by James Kusick

Grasses and weeds have long been regarded as pests by farmers worldwide. Unknown to many, some of these lowly grasses have remarkable chemical properties which could be used as medicine to treat various diseases. One of them is the lemongrass (*Cymbopogon citratus*) or locally known as tanglad.

The Industrial Technology Development Institute of the Department of Science and Technology (ITDI-DOST), through its Chemicals & Minerals Division has tapped the lemongrass oil as a potential anti-fungal topical eye medication.

In a study conducted by experts, lemongrass oil is found to have strong anti-fungal properties when tested to cure keratomycosis in rabbits. Keratomycosis is the inflammation of cornea often characterized by burning or blurring of vision.

Also, earlier studies have shown that lemongrass oil possesses strong antibacterial properties against both gram- positive (e.g. Staphylococcus aureus) and gram-negative bacteria (e.g. Escherichia coli). Moreover, it has also been found to have strong chemical properties that have potentials to cure various fungal diseases.

Aside from its medical uses, lemongrass is also valued for economic and environmental reasons such as: a cost-effective alternative to commercial topical ophthalmic anti-fungal; could help decrease dependence on imported drugs; could help boost the essential oil industry; has safe active ingredients; and an efficient source of livelihood and employment.

This technology had been entered during the 2002 National Inventor's Week Competition and won 2nd prize under the LIKHA Award for Outstanding Creative Research in the area of Health, Education, and Entertainment.

For inquiries, please contact Chemicals & Minerals Division, ITDI-DOST, Gen Santos Ave., Bicutan, Taguig at telephone nos. 8372071-82, loc.2226 or 2216 or email itdi@dost.gov.ph. This technology had been entered during the 2002 National Inventor's Week Competition and won 2nd prize under the LIKHA Award for Outstanding Creative Research in the area of Health, Education, and Entertainment. For inquiries, please contact Chemicals & Minerals Division, ITDI-DOST, Gen Santos Ave., Bicutan, Taguig at telephone nos. 8372071-82, loc.2226 or 2216 or email itdi@dost.gov.ph. (Mary Charlotte Fresco, S&T Media Service)

Health Benefits of Lemon Grass



Be it ever so humble, there is no grass like a lemon grass. A superb medicinal plant and a tasty food flavoring.

Lemon grass (scientific name: *Cymbopogon citratus*) is one of those wondrous herbs that one can always associate with Asian cooking, be they Thai, Malaysian and Vietnamese. Homegrown meal enthusiasts always have this tropical grass at hand for its aromatic citrus flavor with a trace of ginger.

The leaves and base of this tender perennial are used as a food flavoring, particularly in fish and poultry dishes, and its essential oils are used medicinally. Its distinctive flavor balances hot chilies and contributes to the elaborate, multi-layered flavors of many dishes in South East Asian cuisine.

As the long, thin, green leaves are tough and fibrous, the outside leaves and the tips are usually chopped very finely or discarded from the dish before it is served. The base is often ground. Citral, an essential oil also found in lemon peel, is the constituent responsible for its taste and aroma.

Few people know that its other popular name is citronella - the common scent you usually find in candles, perfumes and soaps. Citronella is known for its calming effect that **relieves insomnia** or **stress**. It is also considered as a mild insect repellent. But more than scent, lemon grass **provides a lot of health benefits**. Studies have shown that the lemon grass has **antibacterial and antifungal properties**. Mixed with pepper, it's a home therapy for menstrual troubles and nausea. Drank as tea, it is an effective diuretic.

The Lemon grass is a **good cleanser** that helps to **detoxify the liver, pancreas, kidney, bladder and the digestive tract**. It **cuts down uric acid, cholesterol, excess fats and other toxins in the body while stimulating digestion, blood circulation, and lactation**; it also alleviates indigestion and gastroenteritis. It is said that lemongrass also helps improve the skin by reducing acne and pimples and **acts as a muscle and tissue toner**. Also, it can **reduce blood pressure**. You should make a concoction healthy by simply letting the leaves stay in hot (dispenser) or boiled water (best kept in thermos, or teapot) for around 5 to 10 minutes, then drink to your heart's content (it is not acidic unlike most tea. In fact, it is very alkaline). You enjoy the real fresh green tea, owing to its chlorophyll that is generously released into the water! *(NOTE: It is not advisable to overstep or reuse the leaves. At the very least reason, the best flavor and quality of the tea is only on the first and up to the 2nd or 3rd refill.)* NOTE ALSO: Do not use distilled/ "purified" water as its acidic nature "kills" the chlorophyll. Natural or alkaline or tap water is best.

Lemon grass, also known as Sweet Rush and sometimes called Fever Grass in the Caribbean, can be used as a remedy for fatigue, fevers, and colds. *(When it comes to pets, citronella is used to neutralize excessive barking of dogs. Since dogs hate citronella, it is sprayed to dogs to prevent them from barking or just to lessen the behavior).*

A recent study by the Food and Nutrition Research Institute of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) claims that every 100g of edible portion of lemon grass, can contain up to 24.205 micrograms of beta-carotene, the anti-oxidant that scientists believe can help prevent cancer. Another DOST study shows that lemon grass oil has the potential as a tropical eye medication against keratomycosis, an inflammation of cornea often associated with burning or blurring of vision.

Ref: <http://www.buzzle.com/editorials/9-2-2006-107399.asp>

LEMON GRASS AS EYE MEDICATION

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February 25, 2004
p. B-6

Local experts discovered that lemon grass, a fast growing tall, aromatic perennial grass that grows up to 1.5 meters high, has remarkable chemical properties which could be used as medicine to treat various diseases.

Lemongrass (*Cymbopogon citratus*), locally known as tanglad, was used in traditional Indian medicine for infectious illnesses and fever. Modern research in India shows that it also acts as a sedative on the central nervous system.

With its perceived medicinal properties, the Industrial Technology Development Institute of the Department of Science and Technology (ITDI-DOST) tapped lemongrass oil as potential anti-fungal topical eye medication.

According to DOST, western studies confirmed that lemongrass oil has a strong anti-fungal properties when tested to cure keratomycosis in rabbits. Keratomycosis is the inflammation of the cornea of the eye often characterized by burning or blurring of vision. It has also been found to have strong chemical properties that have potentials to cure various fungal diseases.

Aside from its medical uses, lemongrass has economic and environmental value for being cost-effective alternative to commercial topical ophthalmic and anti-fungal treatments.

By using lemongrass oil, the Philippine government could help decrease dependence on imported drugs and could help boost the essential oil industry.

DOST continues to develop the lemongrass oil as potential topical eye medication that will benefit not only the herbal industry but the local consumers as well.

Anonymous. (February 25, 2004). Lemon Grass As Eye Medication. The Manila Bulletin. Retrieved September 14, 2005 from the World Wide Web:
<http://www.pchrd.dost.gov.ph/library/LEMONGRASS/mb0225200402.html>

FRESH LEMON GRASS

By: Ellen Tordesillas, MALAYA ONLINE

All about Lemon Grass (Tanglad)

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MALAYA NEWSPAPER ARTICLE ABOUT FRESH LEMON GRASS

While I was undergoing chemotherapy for ovarian cancer, my oncologist, Dr. Cecilia Llave, suggested that I try tanglad (lemon grass) for a drink, a tip she got from one of her patients.

That's what I have been doing the past three years. I don't know if tanglad has something to do with it but so far I'm okay.

A few weeks ago, an article on the medicinal powers of tanglad went the rounds of internet. There's no harm trying this. A bunch of tanglad is ten centavos. Or you can plant it in your backyard for a steady supply.

The article is by Allison Kaplan Sommer:

"At first, Benny Zabidov, an Israeli agriculturalist who grows greenhouses full of lush spices on a pastoral farm in Kfar Yedidya in the Sharon region, couldn't understand why so many cancer patients from around the country were showing up on his doorstep asking for fresh lemon grass.

"It turned out that their doctors had sent them.

"They had been told to drink eight glasses of hot water with fresh lemongrass steeped in it on the days that they went for their radiation and chemotherapy treatments," Zabidov told ISRAEL21c. "And this is the place you go to in Israel for fresh lemon grass.'

"It all began when researchers at Ben Gurion University of the Negev discovered last year that the lemon aroma in herbs like lemon grass kills cancer cells in vitro, while leaving healthy cells unharmed.

"The research team was led by Dr. Rivka Ofir and Prof. Yakov Weinstein, incumbent of the Albert Katz Chair in Cell-Differentiation and Malignant Diseases, from the Department of Microbiology and Immunology at BGU.

"Citral is the key component that gives the lemony aroma and taste in several herbal plants such as lemon grass (*Cymbopogon citratus*), melissa (*Melissa officinalis*) and verbena (*Verbena officinalis*.)

"According to Ofir, the study found that citral causes cancer cells to 'commit suicide: using apoptosis, a mechanism called programmed cell death.

"A drink with as little as one gram of lemon grass contains enough citral to prompt the cancer cells to commit suicide in the test tube.

"The BGU investigators checked the influence of the citral on cancerous cells by adding them to both cancerous cells and normal cells that were grown in a petri dish. The quantity added in the concentrate was equivalent to the amount contained in a cup of regular tea using one gram of lemon herbs in hot water. While the citral killed the cancerous cells, the normal cells remained unharmed.

"The findings were published in the scientific journal *Planta Medica*, which highlights research on alternative and herbal remedies. Shortly afterwards, the discovery was featured in the popular Israeli press.

"Why does it work? Nobody knows for certain, but the BGU scientists have a theory.

"In each cell in our body, there is a genetic program which causes programmed cell death. When something goes wrong, the cells divide with no control and become cancer cells. In normal cells, when the cell discovers that the control system is not operating correctly - for example, when it recognizes that a cell contains faulty genetic material following cell division - it triggers cell death," explains Weinstein. "This research may explain the medical benefit of these herbs.'

"The success of their research led them to the conclusion that herbs containing citral may be consumed as a preventative measure against certain cancerous cells.

"As they learned of the BGU findings in the press, many physicians in Israel began to believe that while the research certainly needed to be explored further, in the meantime it would be advisable for their patients, who were looking for any possible tool to fight their condition, to try to harness the cancer-destroying properties of citral.

"That's why Zabidov's farm - the only major grower of fresh lemon grass in Israel - has become a pilgrimage destination for these patients. Luckily, they found themselves in sympathetic hands. Zabidov greets visitors with a large kettle of aromatic lemon grass tea, a plate of cookies, and a supportive attitude.

"My father died of cancer, and my wife's sister died young because of cancer," said Zabidov. "So I understand what they are dealing with. And I may not know anything about medicine, but I'm a good listener. And so they tell me about their expensive painful treatments and what they've been through. I would never tell them to stop being treated, but it's great that they are exploring alternatives and drinking the lemon grass tea as well."

"Zabidov knew from a young age that agriculture was his calling. At age 14, he enrolled in the Kfar Hayarok Agricultural high school. After his army service, he joined an idealistic group which headed south, in the Arava desert region, to found a new moshav (agricultural settlement) called Tsofar.

"We were very successful; we raised fruits and vegetables, and," he notes with a smile, "We raised some very nice children."

"On a trip to Europe in the mid-80s, he began to become interested in herbs.

Israel, at the time, was nothing like the trend-conscious cuisine-oriented country it is today, and the only spices being grown commercially were basics like parsley, dill, and coriander.

"Wandering in the Paris market, looking at the variety of herbs and spices, Zabidov realized that there was a great export potential in this niche. He brought samples back home with him, "which was technically illegal," he says with a guilty smile, to see how they would grow in his desert greenhouses.

Soon, he was growing basil, oregano, tarragon, chives, sage, marjoram and melissa, and mint just to name a few.

"His business began to outgrow his desert facilities, and so he decided to move north, settling in the moshav of Kfar Yedidya, an hour and a half north of Tel Aviv. He is now selling "several hundred kilos" of lemon grass per week, and has signed with a distributor to package and put it in health food stores.

"Zabidov has taken it upon himself to learn more about the properties of citral, and help his customers learn more, and has invited medical experts to his farm to give lectures about how the citral works and why.

"He also felt a responsibility to know what to tell his customers about its use. 'When I realized what was happening, I picked up the phone and called Dr. Weinstein at Ben-Gurion University, because these people were asking me exactly the best way to consume the citral. He said to put the loose grass in hot water, and drink about eight glasses each day.'

"Zabidov is pleased by the findings, not simply because it means business for his farm, but because it might influence his own health. "Even before the news of its benefits were demonstrated, he and his family had been drinking lemon grass in hot water for years, 'just because it tastes good.'"