

13 Philippines Herbs & Plants Recommended by DOH

Herbal Plants Recommended by the Philippine's Department of Health (DOH)

In 1997, President Fidel V. Ramos realized the value of the traditional medicines in the Philippines and signed into law Republic Act 8423 (R.A. 8423), also known as the Traditional and Alternative Medicine Act (TAMA) of 1997.



The law created the Philippine Institute of Traditional and Alternative Health Care (PITAHC) whose mandate is to promote and advocate the use of traditional and alternative health care modalities through scientific research and product development.



1. Sambong or Blumea camphor (Blumea balsamifera)

It is a very popular Philippine herbal flowering plant used as medicine to treat kidney stones, wounds and cuts, rheumatism, anti-diarrhea, anti-spasms, colds and coughs and hypertension. It is also used for infected wounds, respiratory infections, and stomach pains. Sambong is very popular among people



with **kidney problems** because of its diuretic qualities. It can be taken as an early afternoon tea to maintain a healthy urinary tract.

By **Althea Group**

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Endorsed by the Philippine's Department of Health as a diuretic treatment for hypertension. Sambong helps flush **uric acid** as well.

The Philippine National Kidney and Transplant Institute recommend taking Sambong for patients with renal problems. Studies noted that it may help to delay **dialysis** and other kidney problems. Sambong has also antibacterial and antifungal properties.

Sambong is best for: Maintaining healthy kidneys.



2. Akapulko or Ringworm Bush or Acapulco (*Cassia alata*)

Also known as Bayabas-Bayabasan, Akapulko is used to treat tinea infections, insect bites, ringworms, eczema, scabies, and itchiness. The leaves can be pounded and its extract directly applied to the affected skin problem. The leaves contain chrysophanic acid, a fungicide that is used to treat fungal or skin infections. The leaves extract can also be used in homemade soaps, shampoos, and lotions.

Akapulko is best for: Relieving scabies or insect bites.



3. Ampalaya or Bitter Gourd (*Momordica charantia*)

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A very popular vegetable in the Philippines, it is eaten along with fish dishes or plainly sauteed. Known as one of the 'King of Bitters', this Philippine herbal medicine has been found to be effective in the treatment of diabetes (diabetes mellitus), hemorrhoids, coughs, burns and scalds, and being studied for anti-cancer properties.

Even the leaves has curative effects and is said to affect alleviate rheumatism and **gout**. But it is known more as a food supplement for diabetic patients and lowering of blood sugar and blood pressure levels. Ampalaya is also available in capsule and is commercially available as tea.

Ampalaya is best for: Diabetics



4. Bawang or Garlic (*Allium sativum*)

Bawang is a the most common form of herbal medicine in the Philippines. Widely used to cook any dish, it has medicinal properties that may treat infection. It has antibacterial and anti-inflammatory, anti-cancer and antihypertensive properties. Some take it raw, contained in a capsule as a supplement to reduce **cholesterol** levels. It has a spicy and strong pungent flavor that is aromatic for many Asians.

In the Philippines, garlic is known for its significant impact on reducing blood pressure in people with high blood pressure. Eating garlic regularly helps boost the immune system and when raw can be used as an antibacterial topical rub for skin unsightly blemishes.

Bawang is best for: Regulate blood pressure and as anti inflammatory supplement.



5. Bayabas leaves or Guava (*Psidium guajava*)

Although more popular with its delicious fruit, Bayabas leaves is classified as a very effective herbal medicine used as antiseptic, anti-inflammatory, antispasmodic, antioxidant hepatoprotective, anti-allergy, antimicrobial, anti-plasmodial, anti-cough, antidiabetic, and antigenotoxic in folkloric medicine. The leaves are boiled and the cooled down tea like liquid is used wash the wound. It helps dry the **wounds** faster, even on open wounds because of its antibacterial qualities.

The liquid is also used traditionally for “labatiba or lavativa” or enema. The cooled down liquid is pumped through the rectum and in minutes should be flushed, cleaning the intestine. Traditionally, it helps to keep a healthy intestine.

Bayabas Leaves is best for: Natural antiseptic ritual for wounds.



6. Lagundi or Five-leaved Chaste Tree (*Vitex negundo*)

very popular leaves in the Philippine used to treat cough, colds, and fever. It is also used as a relief for asthma & pharyngitis, rheumatism, dyspepsia, boils, and diarrhea. Because of its known qualities, local Pharmaceutical companies have developed convenient capsule forms of Lagundi. It has become the most popular alternative medicine to drug cough syrup in the Philippines.

Lagundi leaves is best for: Coughs and asthma





7. Niyog-niyogan or Rangoon Creeper (*Quisqualis indica* L.)

It is a type of vine known as “Chinese honeysuckle” not to be mistaken as coconut. This Philippine herbal medicine is used to eliminate intestinal parasites. The Philippine Department of Health recommends this Philippine herb for its deworming property. Although it is also known to affect ulcers, headaches, diarrhea, fever, painful urination, and said to be anticancer, its extract is more popular as an alternative deworming medicine.

Niyog-niyogan is best for: Deworming



8. Tsaang Gubat or Scorpion Bush (*Ehretia microphylla*)

It is known as “wild tea” in the Philippines herbal medicine, taken as a tea to treat skin allergies including **eczema**, scabies and itchinness wounds in childbirth. It also has properties that is helpful to eczema or mild psoriasis, scabies and itchinness. Said to have been introduced from China, the plant is widely used as ornamental bushes in the Philippines because it is pliable and easy to grow and maintain.

Tsaang Gubat is best for: Skin allergy



9. Pansit-Pansitan / Ulasimang Bato or Clear Weed or Silver Bush (*Peperomia pellucida*)

It is a Philippine herbal medicine known for its effectivity in treating arthritis and gout. It is also popular as folklore medicine for eye inflammation, **high blood pressure**, arthritis, gout, skin boils or wounds, pimples, renal or kidney problems among others. It is best taken as part of a meal or salad. Many are not familiar with the healing properties of this weed, as it is commonly found in creeks and is considered as plant pest rather than medicinal food.

Pansit-Pansitan is best for: Gout and arthritis

10. Yerba Buena or Mint (*Clinopodium douglasii*)

Commonly known as Peppermint, it is used as analgesic to relieve body aches and pain due to rheumatism and gout. It is also used to treat coughs, colds, insect bites. As pain reliever which is also good for stomach, tooth, and headache. It can be taken as tea to relieve rheumatism, arthritis, cough and colds, nausea and fainting. Smelling the leaves gives instant relief from stress and headache.

Yerba Buena is best for: Instant relief from cough related headache.



11. Malunggay or Horseradish Tree (*Moringa Oleifera*)

Traditionally used in chicken soups and cooking beans, this super-food has always been known among Filipinos to increase milk in lactating women. The leaves is a good source of phosphorus and iron. It can also be used to treat hiccoughs, asthma, gout, lumbago, rheumatism, enlarged spleen or **liver** and other deep-seated inflammations. It can be used to clean wounds and sores.

Moringa Oleifera has strong antioxidants and anti-inflammatory compounds. It is a rich alternative to meat protein and is a significant source of Vitamin A, potassium, calcium, and Vitamin C. Best added in soup dishes. Although it is more effective raw, the bitter taste is undesirable.

Malunggay is best for: Antioxidant and Vitamin C

12. Tawa-Tawa or Asthma Plant (*Euphorbia Hirta*)

Although the Philippine Department of Health (DOH) have not officially endorsed it as treatment for **dengue** fever, in 2014 it was included in the list of herbal Plants that DOH recommends for certain sickness, particularly **dengue**. Many Filipinos have seen its benefit when it comes to upper respiratory problems and faster recovery from Dengue that immediately increases blood platelet count.

Tawa-Tawa or literary laugh-laugh is nothing to laugh about because it has valuable medicinal properties that are not limited to Dengue but also include asthma, infections, anxiety, diarrhea, and fever. It can be taken as regular tea as it helps boost the immune system.



Despite a recent University of the East Ramon Magsaysay (UERM) study that showed some dengue patients recovered faster with Tawa-Tawa treatment, DOH welcomes the results but cannot at this time recommend its use. According to the UERM study, Tawa-Tawa increases the platelet count of a dengue patient, which helped the patients recover from Dengue faster.

Tawa-Tawa is best for: Asthma, Immune system and Dengue

Banaba or Giant Crape Myrtle (*Lagerstroemia speciosa*)

Although not listed in the recommended herbal plants, it is a very popular Philippine herbal plant leaves used to treat diabetes and kidney failure, obesity and high fever. It is popular in other countries such as India where it is used to treat **diabetes**. Its leaves and flowers contain corrosolic acid, a substance being studied for its **insulin** like effect of lowering the glucose in the body. Also used for weight loss it is rich in vitamins and minerals as well as dietary fibers.

Folkloric uses of Banaba herbal medicine include the treatment for diarrhea, constipation, **inflammation of kidneys**, dysuria and other urinary dysfunctions. The Banaba leave can be boiled and drank as a tea.

Banaba is best for: Kidney health

DISCLAIMER: This article is based on scholarly articles from Wikipedia, the Department of Health, and long-held traditional knowledge of this folk medicines. Laminine is not related nor its ingredient has any of these plants, thus it is not an herbal supplement. This article merely reflects what some herb plants may do to the body.

