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**Waila Shalini**  
L.M.S. P.G.College, Rishikesh,  
Uttarakhand, India

## Medicinal qualities of plants traced from their appearance, shape and colour

**Waila Shalini**

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### Abstract

Human beings have always had recourse to nature for life and health. From time immemorial, plants have played a significant role as protective and curative agents. At present of about 75% of our medicines, we rely on the curative properties of plants. Many medicinal herbs are stamped as it were, with some clear indication of their uses. The inner qualities and healing powers of the plants might also be revealed by external sign. Appearance of plants or their parts points to the ailment they treat. It is believed that from the outward shapes and qualities of things we may know their inwards virtues.

**Methodology:** The curative properties of plants might be revealed by external signs. This appears to hold true from the cases examined in various plants. During different work shop and in research period it is found that the red colour of gum, flowers and wood cure diseases or ailments related to blood, burns and sunstroke. The white colour latex would help cure complaints about milk production or flow of milk. The white flowered variety of *Clitoria ternata* cure leucoderma, a skin disease in which the skin develops white colouration. Yellow sap, extract, wood or plant itself would cure yellowing of body or jaundice. Plants bearing spines would cure scorpion sting, snake bite or ant bite. Tubercles raised on bark are thought to be beneficial in treating pimples.

**Keywords:** Medicinal qualities, shape and colour.

### 1. Introduction

The history of medicine is almost as ancient as the origin of human race. The subject of human sufferings and diseases was/is intimately associated with sorcery, religion and myth. Different plant species from ancient times have been used as healing agents. But not much thought has been given to finding out how the real scientific insight of mankind was illumined. Some medicinal uses and medicinal qualities of plants have been studied critically and conceived them to be helpful for tracing their origin, colours etc. Beet roots, being red, are recommended for consumption by patients to increase percentage of haemoglobin. Medicine prepared from the aerial elongated roots of banyan tree is used to increase hair length, especially of ladies. Shapes and appearances of some plants represents one of the organs of the human body and indicates that the plant will cure diseases of that organ. For example, flowers shaped like uterus are useful for treating complaints of uterus and delivery; juice produced in a stomach-like pitcher is useful in stomach complaints twinning habit, hooded appearance of flowers and elongated, twisted fruits or roots, as also seeds mottled like snake etc. are good in cases of snake bites, Like wise plants bearing sting-shaped inflorescence would help cure scorpion sting. It is to be particularly noted that jointed stems are thought useful for bone fractures, joints-ache and rheumatism. Similarly, fruits with twisting threads are considered beneficial in cases of squeezing of skin. The inflated fruits are considered useful in treating flatulence. Plant species inhabiting in or around water sources are reported useful for injuries caused due to constant touch of water armed as also for inflamed eye. List of such types of medicinal plants are given below: clean water and air-dried.

**Corresponding Author:**  
**Waila Shalini**  
L.M.S. P.G.College, Rishikesh,  
Uttarakhand, India

**Table 1:** List of medicinal plants used for treatment on the basis of their shape and Colour

| Sl. No. | Medicinal plants and Family/and local name                   | Medicinal uses  | Originally related with shape and colours   |
|---------|--|---|---|
| 1.      | <i>Acacia catechu</i><br>(Mimosaceae)<br>/Khaira             | Bark juice is used in haemoptysis   | The plants yield tannin which is red or blood coloured. The diseases for which it is administered in related with blood.                                      |
| 2.      | <i>Amaranthus cruentus</i><br>(Amaranthaceae)/Cholai         | Root paste is applied on snake bite or scorpion sting   | The plants bear spines.   |
| 3.      | <i>Argemone mexicana</i><br>(Papaveraceae)/Satyanasi         | Yellow juice of this plant is used to treat jaundice  | This plant yields yellow coloured juice.  |
| 4.      | <i>Baliospermum montanum</i><br>(Euphorbiaceae)/Danti        | Pulverized seeds are mixed in boiled water and then drunk against snake bite                  | Seeds are mottled like snakes.  |
| 5.      | <i>Bambusa arundinacea</i><br>(Poaceae)/Vamsa                | Young shoots are crushed and applied on joints to treat rheumatism                            | The strong nodes appeal its use for human joint.  |
| 6.      | <i>Bombax ceiba</i><br>(Bombacaceae)/Salmani                 | Water extract of thorns is used for treating pimples (Kothari & Rao 2000)                     | Pimples are raised spots on skin. Thorns or tubercles appear on the bark of this species.   |
| 7.      | <i>Calotropis gigantea</i><br>(Asclepiadaceae)/Aak/Madar     | Latex is applied in cases of insufficient breast milk   | The plant yields white latex.   |
| 8.      | <i>Cardiospermum halicacabum</i><br>(Sapindaceae)/Kanphuti   | Plant juice is fed to infants in flatulence   | The fruits bear inflated or puffed calyx. The stomach gets inflated or puffed due to flatulence.  |
| 9.      | <i>Cissus quadrangularis</i><br>(Vitaceae)/Hadjoda           | Stems are applied on bone fracture  | Jointed nature of stems is thought useful for similar jointed structures as the bones.  |
| 10.     | <i>Cuscuta reflexa</i><br>(Solanaceae)/Amarbela              | Decoction or extract of stem is administered orally against jaundice                          | The skin and eyes of a patient suffering from jaundice turn yellow. Urine also becomes yellow. Hence, yellow-coloured stem of this taxon is conceived useful. |
| 11.     | <i>Euphorbia hirta</i><br>(Euphorbiaceae)/Dugdhi             | Plants extract is given to lactating mothers for increasing milk yield                        | The plant is white latex yielder.   |
| 12.     | <i>Gloriosa superba</i><br>(Liliaceae)/Kalihari              | Paste of tuber is taken internally for snake bite   | The plant twists spirally on other plants like snakes. Also, the elegance of flowers as a hood of cobra is emphasized.  |
| 13.     | <i>Haldinia cordifolia</i><br>(Rubiaceae)/Haldu              | Bark paste is beneficial in case of scar information on skin and when the body becomes yellow | The wood is yellow and hence its bark is employed in such cases.  |
| 14.     | <i>Helicteres isora</i><br>(Sterculiaceae)/Marorphali        | Seed oil is used to massage babies affected by squeezing of skin                              | Fruits are twisted or torsioned at maturity and appear as if they are squeezed. Hence, these are used for similar skin affection.                             |
| 15.     | <i>Heliotropium indicum</i><br>(Boraginaceae)/Hattajurie     | Leaf juice is used against scorpion- sting  | The inflorescence is shape like sting of scorpion.  |
| 16.     | <i>Hemidesmus indicus</i><br>(Asclepiadaceae)/Anantmul       | Roots are consumed by a lady after childbirth for lactation                                   | The plant is laticiferous and the latex is white coloured; hence it is used to promote lactation.   |
| 17.     | <i>Martynia annua</i><br>(Peadaliaceae)/Bichua               | Seeds are used as an antidote for snake poison or scorpion-sting                              | The seed-container, i.e. fruit, is acutely hooked or pronged simulating a hood or sting.  |
| 18.     | <i>Pterocarpus santalinus</i><br>(Papilionaceae)/Lalchandani | Wood is useful in diseases of blood   | Wood is red; hence it is thought useful in blood diseases.  |
| 19.     | <i>Woodfordia fruticosa</i><br>(Lythraceae)/Dhataki          | Flowers are useful in treating blood dysentery  | Red flowers are emphasized.   |

## Conclusion

Beyond doubt, the science of medicinal plants originated as a part of human necessity. This necessity yielded the mass of observations that accumulated in the past. From the examined in various plants we found that the colour of these plants like red colour, white colour, yellow colour as well as their shape, size are also the most beneficial in treating the ailment human body.

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