

Medicines in the garden

Researchers want to document and investigate how plants were used in folk medicine before the knowledge is lost.

Clausena lansium

Wampee, fool's curry leaf

- An evergreen tree with a strong scent native to southern China and grown in parts of South-east Asia. Its sweet-sour fruit is edible and resembles a yellow-skinned grape. Users also boil and drink the leaves and fruit.



Pereskia bleo

Rose cactus, seven-star needle

- A cactus shrub native to Panama and Colombia with large orange flowers and thorns on its branches measuring between 5mm and 10mm. Users in Singapore and Malaysia usually chew the leaves raw or boil and drink them.

Vernonia amygdalina

South African leaf, bitter leaf

- The leaves have a characteristic odour and a bitter taste. The plant is native to Nigeria and common in Singapore and Malaysia. It has many medicinal properties and is eaten as a vegetable in Africa.



Leea indica

Bandidoot berry, memali

- A shrub or small tree with ribbed branches and spirally arranged leaves. It is native to South Asia and South-east Asia, and can be commonly found in Singapore. The dried leaves are often boiled and consumed as a tea.



Vitex trifolia

Simpleleaf chastetree, legundi

Its stem and the underside of its leaves are covered in soft hairs. Found throughout Asia, Australia and the Pacific Islands. In traditional Chinese medicine, the fruits are consumed to treat fever, headache and conjunctivitis.



Strobilanthes crispus

Black-face general, pokok pecah beling

- Native to Madagascar and Indonesia. Its dark green leaves have a rough texture and are said to help with kidney problems and diabetes. Users commonly boil the leaves and stem into a tea and drink it. The leaves can also be bought commercially as a herbal tea "detox" product.



Clinacanthus nutans

Sabah snake grass, belalai gajah

- A plant native to Indonesia and other parts of South-east Asia that was originally used to treat snake bites. Its purported efficacy against cancer has been spread through blogs, e-mails and word of mouth, making it popular among users here. The leaves are often juiced or boiled into a tea.