

Compilation of Ethnomedicinal Knowledge of Acanthaceae Species By Ethnic Group in Sabah and Sarawak, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

With over 4 000 species worldwide, the Acanthaceae family is a large and diverse group of plants. Within the regions of Sabah and Sarawak, over a hundred species of Acanthaceae have been identified, with many of them being employed for their traditional medicinal properties. The ethnomedicinal knowledge of Acanthaceae by ethnic in Sabah and Sarawak is a complex and fascinating topic. Different ethnic groups in the region have different uses for this plant and their knowledge is often passed down through generations. Hence, the aim for this paper is to compile and comprehend all published information on the usage of Acanthaceae species by the ethnic group in Sabah and Sarawak for traditional medicinal purposes. From our data collections, seven species of Acanthaceae is known being used traditionally to treat ailments such as stomach aches, skin problems or headaches either by boil the leaves and drink as a tea or applied as a paste. For example, the Murut people of Sabah use the leaves of *Graptophyllum pictum* (L.) Griff. to treat headache while the Dayak people of Sarawak also use the leaves of *G. pictum* for bathing to treat jaundice for baby. This knowledge is an invaluable asset that merits preservation and can facilitate the development of novel disease treatments. Data from this paper also important for the conservation of Acanthaceae plants as well as for the development of new medicinal and food products. To date, the knowledge of these plants is still being actively researched and documented.