Development is the process of enlarging peoples' choices to live long and healthy lives, to have access to knowledge, and to have access to income and assets: to enjoy a decent standard of living.

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INDIGENOUS SOUTH EAST ASIAN HERBAL REMEDIES
Symptomatic relief for People with HIV/AIDS

South East Asia
HIV and Development Programme

Indigenous South East Asian herbal remedies
Symptomatic relief for People with HIV/AIDS

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FOREWORD

By tapping into local knowledge of South East Asian indigenous plants with medicinal value, herbal remedies have been incorporated in the treatment of common symptoms and minor opportunistic infections among PWHAs. Modern medicines are often expensive, thus not accessible to many people, and sometimes associated with undesirable side effects. Besides providing symptomatic relief with fewer side effects than many modern medicines, indigenous plants are also effective nutritional supplements. Simple preparations and self-production by PWHAs, or in cooperation with a pharmacist or health care provider, enables self-reliance and avoidance of deceitful commercial sales or other misuses.

This option has been applied to AIDS affected people at Mae Chan hospital, in Mae Chan district, Chiang Rai province, Thailand. The Thai Ministry of Health has promoted the use of Thai herbs in hospitals for common symptoms, such as cough and constipation, since 1978. In 1985, Mae Chan hospital produced and utilized Thai herbs in a clinical setting, and in 1996, the day care center supported PWHA groups in the production of Thai herbs for self-care, income generation and group activity.

The plants described in the following pages have been used successfully in the treatment of opportunistic infections at Mae Chan hospital. Many of the plants have been internationally recognized for their medicinal properties and are undergoing further research into their application in modern medicine. However, the information provided here aims to promote self-care and treatment, not to provide cures.¹

Lee-Nah Hsu
Manager
Building Regional HIV Resilience
UNDP South East Asia HIV and Development Programme

¹ No plant should be used unless advised by a reliable health care professional. The UNDP will not accept any liability for any harm, damage or illness arising from the misuse of the plants mentioned herein.
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Kra-jiap-maun (กระเจี๊ยมดอง)

**Generic Name**
Okra, Gumbo, Calalou, Lady’s Finger, Huang Shu K’Uei, Kacang Bendi

**Scientific Name**
Abelmoschus esculentus

**Family Name**
Malvaceae

**Active Parts and Usage**

*Leaves*: Simmer in water to create a soft, warm pulp and apply to sores and lesions.

*Young leaves*: Dry, grind and ingest to temporarily reduce high blood pressure.

*Young fruit/pod*: Drinking a decoction acts as a diuretic and stimulates appetite. Also helps to reduce inflammation of mucous membranes, such as the nose and throat.

*Dried fruit*: Grind, take one tablespoon with water three to four times per day. This reduces indigestion by coating the stomach.

**Contraindications:**
Gout, Pregnancy (may induce abortion)
**Nguag-pla-mor** (หัว룹มาโม)

**Generic name**
Thistlelike Plant, Sea Holly, Acanthus, Jeruju Putih (Malay), Holly Mangrove

**Scientific Name**
Acanthus ebracteatus, Acanthus ilicifolius

**Family**
Acanthaceae

**Active parts and usage**

**Leaves:**
1. Boil in water and drink for relief of fever or allergic swelling of skin (urticaria).
2. Use fresh leaves to cover and treat infected wounds and abscesses.

**Stems:** Boil in water and apply externally to treat itchiness of skin.

**Seeds:** Mix with any herbs that contain anti-cough or anti-bacterial properties [such as Bo-ra-phet (*Tinospora tuberculata*), Fah-tha-lai-jon (*Andrographis paniculata*) or Ma-ra-khee-nok (*Momordica charantia*)] for the treatment of cough and skin infections.

**Root:** Boil fresh roots in water, and drink for relief of the symptoms of herpes zoster.
Kra-thiem (กระเทียม)

**Generic Name**
Garlic

**Scientific Name**
Allium sativum

**Family**
Alliaceae

**Active parts and usage:**
Garlic has anti-septic and anti-fungal properties. Daily intake of garlic has beneficial effects on the heart and circulatory system.⁶

**Root:** It is recommended that the root be 100 days old before using as medicine.
1. To relieve whiteness in mouth or tongue, when symptom is at its peak, chop one head of fresh garlic and eat with rice three times a day. When symptoms disappear, continue to eat 1-2 cloves per day to ensure that symptoms do not return. Within 7 days, symptoms should completely disappear.
2. For relief of gas or heartburn, eat 5-7 raw pieces after meals or when symptoms occur.⁷

**Juice:** Extracted from the root, it acts as antiseptic in treatment of wounds. ⁸

**Caution:** Be careful not to eat garlic alone as it may burn the mouth.
Waan-hang–jo-ra-khe (่วนหนังกระเข)

**Generic name**
Aloe vera

**Scientific Name**
Aloe vera, Aloe barbadensis

**Family**
Aloaceae

**Active parts and usage:**
Drinking 100% aloe juice as a nutritional supplement decreases the incidence of opportunistic infections in HIV positive patients. One study found that aloe extract reduced the reproduction of HIV-infected cells by 30% and slowed the spread of the virus to healthy cells. The plant is most potent at one year of age.

**Inner gel:**
1. Soak leaves in water for 5-10 minutes to remove sap. Peel skin; cut inner gel into small pieces (approx. 3 grams). Soak in honey for 3 days. Eat as snack or dessert to treat joint or muscle pain.
2. Stimulates healing of skin and has both anti-fungal and anti-bacterial properties. Apply topically to wounds or minor burns twice daily to reduce itching, swelling and pain. Also relieves symptoms of chronic psoriasis if applied topically to itchy patches of skin.

**Caution:** Do not use gel if left exposed for more than 24 hours. Yellow juice may cause skin allergies.
**Fah-tha-lai-jon** (ฟ้าทะลายโจร)

**Generic Name**
King of Bitters, Creat, Creyat Root, Halviva, Karyat, Green Chiretta, Kreat, Indian Echinacea

**Scientific Name**
Andrographis paniculata

**Family**
Acanthaceae

**Active parts and usage**
Plant is most potent when it is approximately 3 months old and beginning to flower.\(^{15}\)

**Leaves:**
1. Grind and mix with vegetable oil (e.g. olive oil, coconut oil). Apply externally to treat minor skin burns.
2. Boil 2-3 handfuls in water for 10-15 minutes. Drink liquid before meals for relief of diarrhea. Use one handful to relieve sore throat.\(^{16}\)
3. Grind leaves thoroughly and mix with honey. Form into balls and leave to dry. Store in closed, dry container. Eat 3-6 pieces, three to four times per day before meals and before bedtime to treat diarrhea and sore throat.\(^{17}\)

**Stems:** Boil in water and drink to treat symptoms of dysentery, common cold, gastroenteritis, fever, tonsillitis and pneumonitis.

**Contraindications**
Pregnancy

**Extract:** Supports normal immune function and may assist anti-retroviral (ARV) drugs in inhibiting the progression of HIV. Studies have shown that one component, andrographolide, “prevented transmission of the virus to other cells and stopped the progress of the disease.”\(^{13}\) Also relieves symptoms of gonorrhea, skin disorders, chronic bronchitis, and ulcers.\(^{14}\)
**Sa-let-phang-phorn** (สลดพังพอน)

**Generic name**
Barleria, Hophead Philippine Violet

**Scientific Name**
Barleria lupulina

**Family**
Acanthaceae

**Active parts and usage:**
**Fresh leaves:**
1. Mix with coconut oil and rub on chronic bumps or rashes once a day before bedtime. Symptoms should disappear within 3 months. Treatment is also effective on insect bites.
2. Mash leaves and apply the liquid to insect bites or skin rashes.  
3. Use one handful of leaves, mash with white liquor or alcohol and clean the infected skin with the mixture.
**Khee-lek**

**Generic name**
Siamese Cassia, Cassod tree, Kassod tree, Pheasant wood, Thai copperpod

**Scientific Name**
Cassia siamea, Cassia florida, Cassia sumatrana, Senna siamea

**Family**
Caesalpiniaceae

**Active parts and usage**

**Fresh, young leaves:**
1. Boil 4-5 handfuls in water and drink as tea before meals for relief of constipation.
2. Use dry leaves (30 grams) or fresh (50 grams) boil with water and drink only the juice before going to bed to relieve insomnia.
3. Mix with white liquor and store for seven days. Ensure that the level of liquor is constant (when reduced, add more to original volume). Drink 1-2 teaspoons of resulting liquid before going to bed to treat insomnia.

**Flowers and seeds:** Boil in water for use as a laxative.

**Note:** Before ingesting flowers and leaves, wash and wring dry several times to reduce the bitter taste before cooking or eating. Can also be used in curry or eaten fresh.
**Pha-yaa-yau** (_INET)  

**Generic name**  
(unknown)

**Scientific Name**  
Clinacanthus nutans

**Family**  
Acanthaceae

**Active parts and usage:**  
**Fresh leaves:**
1. For relief of symptoms of herpes varicella zoster (shingles): wash leaves thoroughly. Pound and cover affected area two to three times daily, morning and evening. Lesions will dry up and itchiness will reduce.
2. Wash, mash and mix 10-15 leaves with white liquor or alcohol (liquid should just cover the leaves). Store mixture for one week, stirring daily. After one week, strain the mixture and apply resulting liquid to the affected area. If inflammation or pain is extreme, place the marinated leaves on the skin. This is effective in treating the symptoms of herpes simplex, varicella zoster and chicken pox.  

**Caution:** Do not apply near eyes.
**Tam-lung** (ตั้งปลิง)

**Generic name**
Ivy gourd, Scarlet Fruited Gourd, Arakis, Akadala, Mughad, Roh, Scarlet Gourd, Tindola, Kundree, Pepasan, Little Gourd

**Scientific Name**
Coccinia grandis, Bryonia grandis, Cephalandra indica

**Family**
Cucurbitaceae

**Active parts and usage:**
**Fresh leaves:**
1. Crush with white whiskey *(yaa dong lao)* and apply liquid all over body to relieve full-body rashes. Rash should disappear within 3-4 days.
2. Mash one handful of leaves with a small amount of water and squeeze for juice. Apply to skin rashes or insect bites until symptoms disappear.²²

**Plant:** Cooked and eaten, acts as a laxative.²³
Kha-min-chan (ข้ามขาน)

**Generic name**
Turmeric, Curcuma

**Scientific Name**
Curcuma longa

**Family**
Zingiberaceae

**Active parts and usage**

**Dried stalk:** Mash and sprinkle the powder on skin to treat skin rashes.  

**Leaves and roots:** Mix with oil, and use as massage oil for relief of muscle pain.

**Fresh root:**
1. To reduce gas and flatulence, crush the root into a small amount of water and ingest 500 mg after meals and before bed.  
2. Slice into 2 inch pieces, scrape off outer skin and wash clean. Pound until smooth and add a small amount of water. Squeeze juice from mixture and drink 2 tablespoons at a time three to four times per day to reduce diarrhea.  
3. Wash and slice, sun dry for 1-2 days. Grind into a powder and mix with honey. Form into balls or capsules and take 500 mg four times per day after meals and before bed to treat stomach problems.

**Dried root:** Grind into a powder and apply to skin. It has analgesic and anti-inflammatory properties while producing fewer side effects than chemical remedies.

**Caution:** Allergic reaction to this herb is common and results in diarrhea, nausea, headache, or insomnia. If these symptoms occur, discontinue treatment.
Ta-khrai (ต้ากรา)

**Generic name**
Lemon Grass, Citronella, Lady’s Mantle, Lion’s Foot, Lapine

**Scientific Name**
Cymbopogon citratus

**Family**
Poaceae

**Active parts and usage:**
**Fresh, mature stalk:**
1. Roast 3-4 stalks and boil in water (salt to taste). Drink as tea three to four times daily to relieve dry cough and runny nose. Symptoms should cease within 3-4 days. Tea is also diuretic and eases difficulty upon urination.²⁹
2. Slice and boil with 500 ml water, use liquid to drink or to cook with any dishes to reduce gas.³⁰

**Root:** Slice and roast until dry. Mix with hot water and drink 75 ml three times a day for relief of difficulty upon urination.³¹

**Stalk and roots:** Cut into 2 inch pieces and boil in 3 cups of water with salt. Boil until water reduces to 1 cup and drink as tea to treat stomachache and gas. ³²

**Oil:** Has antifungal and antibacterial properties. ³³
Mang-khut (มังคุด)

**Generic name**
Mangosteen, King-of-Fruits, Men-gu, ‘Ambrosia of the gods’

**Scientific Name**
Garcinia mangostana

**Family**
Clusiaceae

**Active parts and usage:**
**Rind**:  
1. Wash and clean the rind, then let dry. Grind with boiled water and drink as tea. Relieves diarrhea.  
2. Make a decoction of the rind by simmering it in water until the water is reduced by half. Drink the resulting liquid to relieve the symptoms of diarrhea, cystitis, gonorrhea and chronic inflammation.  

**Dried rind**:  
1. Boil with clear lime water and drink as tea to treat diarrhea.  
2. Crush with a small amount of water and ingest to treat diarrhea: for children, 1-2 teaspoons every 4 hours, for adults, 4 tablespoons every 4 hours.  
3. Crush with clear lime water and apply to skin to treat exposed, broken skin surfaces.

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2 The ‘rind’ refers to the entire outer, purplish part of the fruit.  
3 Calcium oxide powder, mix with warm water. In Thai: naam boon sai.
Ma-ra-khee-nok (มะระเขีนก)

**Generic name**
Bitter Cucumber, Bitter Gourd, Carilla Fruit, Kerala, Jaiva, Balsam Pear

**Scientific Name**
Momordica charantia

**Family**
Cucurbitaceae

**Active parts and usage**

*Leaves:* Apply externally to treat itchiness, scabies and minor skin infections.

*Raw fruits:*
1. Dry, grind and eat for relief of fever or indigestion and can also used as an appetite stimulant. May have anti-viral properties and increases immunity.
2. Boil and drink the resulting liquid to relieve fever.
3. Eat the raw fruit (no seeds) with *nam prik*¹ (for flavor!) to stimulate appetite.
4. To treat skin rashes, mash the fruit and apply directly on rash. ³⁶

*Juice:* Squeeze juice from the raw fruit and drink to reduce fever and/or to regulate menstruation. Also, gargling with the juice relieves sores in the mouth. ³⁷

**Contraindications**
Pregnancy, may induce abortion ³⁸

"A *Momordica* anti-HIV protein... inhibits the replication of HIV in already infected cells [and]... appears to have... limited toxicity to uninfected cells... it could be a powerful and readily available addition to the current arsenal of anti-retrovirals."

—Eric von Wettberg, Swarthmore University

¹ *Nam prik* is the Thai word used to describe many kinds of spicy dips, sauces or pastes used for flavoring in cooking or eaten with other foods.
Phe-ka (โป)  

**Generic Name**  
Indian Trumpet Flower, Panaphania  
Shyonaka (Sanskrit), Midnight Horror  

**Scientific Name**  
Oroxyllum indicum  

**Family**  
Bignoniaceae  

**Active parts and usage:**  
Parts are most effective when seedpods on the tree are dry.  

**Skin of stem:**  
1. Grind with clear limewater. Drinking 3 teaspoons every time diarrhea occurs will gradually improve condition.  
2. Grind with clear limewater and apply to inflamed skin or around a boil or abscess to reduce swelling.  

**Seed:** Boil ½-1 handful with 300 ml of water. Boil over low heat for one hour. Drink resulting liquid three times a day to help with cough, phlegm and cold sores in mouth.  

---  

1 Clear limewater: see footnote on pg. 12.
Luuk-tai-bai (ลูกใต้ใบ)

**Generic Name**
Child, Pick-a-Back, Bhumiala, Black Catnip, Shatterstone, Carry Me Seed, Stonebreaker, Hsieh Hsia Chu, Niruri, Chanca-piedra, Poor man’s quinine

**Scientific Name**
Phyllantus amarus, Phyllantus niruri, Phyllantus asperculata

**Family Name**
Euphorbiaceae

**Active Parts and Usage**
**Stem:** Boil one handful with 2 cups of water until water is reduced to 1½ cups. Drink ½ cup of remaining liquid to reduce fever. This plant is also known to have anti-viral and anti-bacterial properties.

**Caution:** “Prolonged use may cause temporary symptoms of hypoglycemia.”

**Contraindications:**
Pregnancy or nursing
Ma-kham-pom (มะขามป้อม)

**Generic name**
Indian Gooseberry, Myrobalan, Emblic, Yeowkan (Chinese), Amla (Hindi), Nelli (Tamil), Amlaki (Bangla), Malacca Tree

**Scientific Name**
Phyllanthus emblica, Emblica officinalis

**Family**
Euphorbiaceae

**Active parts and usage:**
**Fresh fruit:**
1. Frequently chew or keep in mouth for as long as possible. It has astringent properties that dry out the mouth and help heal wounds, blisters or cold sores in the mouth.
2. Crush 2-3 mature fruits and add salt to taste. Chew or hold mixture in mouth three to four times a day to reduce cough and phlegm.**45**

**Dried fruit:**
1. Boil with water and drink as tea to reduce fever**46**, and symptoms of cold, such as sore throat.**47**
2. Take 3 grams of the fruit without seeds. Mix with milk and blend thoroughly until the texture is like butter. Take mixture three times a day continuously for one week to treat stomach problems.**48**

**Fresh juice:** Drink to treat diarrhea.**49**
Phloo (.wp)

**Generic name**
Betle Pepper, Betel

**Scientific Name**
Piper betle

**Family**
Piperaceae

**Active parts and usage:**
**Fresh leaves:**
1. Boil 1-2 handfuls of leaves and mix with bathwater to reduce bumps and rashes on skin.
2. Crush leaves and rub directly on skin to stop itching of rashes - may sting, when stinging stops, repeat.
3. Mash 1-2 leaves and mix with white liquor. Apply to minor skin rashes.
4. To cure ringworm, mash one handful of leaves with alcohol/white liquor. Squeeze the mixture and apply only the resulting liquid to the affected area. Repeat 5 times daily.\(^50\)

**Caution:** Do not apply to open wounds as it will be very painful.\(^51\)
Fa-rang (ผลผักเขียว)

**Generic name**
Guava

**Scientific Name**
Psidium guajava

**Family**
Myrtaceae

**Active parts and usage**

**Young leaves:** Chew and swallow leaves three to four times a day, or boil leaves and drink as tea three times a day. Helps improve loose bowels.

**Mature leaves:**
1. Cut off both ends of fresh leaves and soak in hot, boiled water. Drinking this as tea should relieve diarrhea within 2 days.
   **Caution:** Too much could cause constipation.  
2. Wash thoroughly and mash 10-15 fresh leaves. Mix with 1 cup of water. Boil with a small amount of salt and drink as tea to relieve diarrhea.

**Fruit:** Eating the young fruit helps relieve loose bowels. Slice the skin and flesh of the fruit and eat or boil with water. Drink as tea. Add salt for flavor.
Ma-kham-dee-khwai (มะกฮัมเปี๊ยะ)

**Generic name**
Soapberry, Savonnier, Soapnut Tree

**Scientific Name**
Sapindus saponaria, Sapindus marginatus, Sapindus emarginatus

**Family**
Sapindaceae

**Active parts and usage**

**Roots:** Grind with water and apply to rash or lesions three to four times per day. Rash will dry up and itchiness will cease.

**Fruit:**
1. Soak in water, use resulting liquid to wash face and to treat dandruff on scalp.55
2. Crush and boil 5 fresh fruits in 1 cup of water. Apply two times per day, morning and evening, until symptoms of skin infection on scalp disappear. 56
3. Crush 1 fresh fruit, without leaves, and stir quickly in water until mixture is foamy. Use mixture as shampoo once per day until symptoms of skin infection on scalp disappear. 57

**Caution:** Do not eat the fruit or allow the juice to touch the eye area. Commonly used to make soap, it contains a natural detergent and is poisonous when ingested. 58
Bo-ra-pet (บอดาเพก)

**Generic Name**
Heart-leaved Moonseed, Brotowali

**Scientific Name**
Tinospora tuberculata, Tinospora crispa, Tinospora rumphii

**Family**
Menispermaceae

**Active parts and usage**

**Leaves:** Mash and apply to skin to relieve sores or swelling.

**Stem:**
1. Cut up and boiled, the extract from the stems can be used for relief of the symptoms of hypertension and may help prevent malaria.
2. Eat 5 cm of fresh stem daily to stimulate appetite and to act as a nutritional supplement.

**Young stem:**
1. Chop and dry in the sun, grind, mix with honey, and make into balls. Eat two to three times daily to reduce fever. Eating 2-4 balls before sleeping at night is said to prolong life.
2. Mix with water (1 part stem to 3 parts water) boil until water is at level of stems. Drink before meals to reduce fever.

**Root & stem:** Mash and mix with tamarind and salt. Eat 1 teaspoon to reduce fever.
**Khing** (ขิง)

**Generic Name**
Ginger, Garden Ginger, Siner, Fiu, Jengibre

**Scientific Name**
Zingiber officinale

**Family**
Zingiberaceae

**Active parts and usage**
Parts most effective at 11-12 months.  

**Root:**
1. Crush one section and mix with a pinch of salt and some lime juice. Hold mixture in mouth to stop dry cough and itchiness of throat. Mixture can also be mixed with a small amount of water and sipped for relief of cough and phlegm. Symptoms should disappear in 7 days.
2. Cut into thumb-sized pieces and boil in water. Drink as tea to treat nausea and vomiting.

**Fresh root:**
1. Slice into 5 inch pieces and boil in one cup of water until water reduces to half its original volume. Drink as tea to treat stomachache and gas.
2. Mix 30g of fresh root with boiling water (500 ml). Let sit for 1 hour and filter out the liquid. Take 2 tablespoons of liquid for relief of stomachache and gas.
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Works Cited

Information not indicated with a corresponding endnote was translated from the Thai publication, *Use of Herbs in Primary Healthcare*, supported by Mae Chan hospital, Chiang Mai, Thailand, 1997.

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11 Herbs in Primary Healthcare: www.thaipun.com/pharmacy
17 See previous endnote.
19 See previous endnote.
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Development is the process of enlarging peoples’ choices to live long and healthy lives, to have access to knowledge, and to have access to income and assets: to enjoy a decent standard of living.


INDIGENOUS SOUTH EAST ASIAN HERBAL REMEDIES
Symptomatic relief for People with HIV/AIDS

UNDP is the UN’s global development network, advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life.

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