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Tiger's milk is a fungus with medicinal value

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DURING the opening ceremony of BioMalaysia 2002, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad mentioned his use of a Chinese remedy which contained "tiger's milk" that helped relieve his cough.

Later, two Chinese practitioners responded and tried to clarify what the so-called "tiger's milk" was.

I would like to add some more information. It is a fungus belonging to the genus *Lignosus* and is locally known as cendawan susu harimau. It is different from *Ganoderma* that we usually associate with ling-zhi.

This particular fungus is not recorded in the ancient Chinese texts on herbal medicine and is not of the traditional Chinese medicine.

It is one of the few medicinal mushrooms found locally. The Temuans I met use this fungus to cure coughs, asthma as well as to strengthen the body when used with other medicinal plants.

This fungus produces a mass of tissues below ground called the sclerotium. This is the part that is used as medicine. This tissue mass is white when sliced open and resembles congealed tiger's milk, hence the name. It is unlikely that it has any association with tigers.

It is sold in some Chinese medicine shops and it costs RM85 per kg or