



HERBS

The Green Pharmacy of Malaysia



**Indu Bala Jaganath
Ng Lean Teik**



With technical support from:
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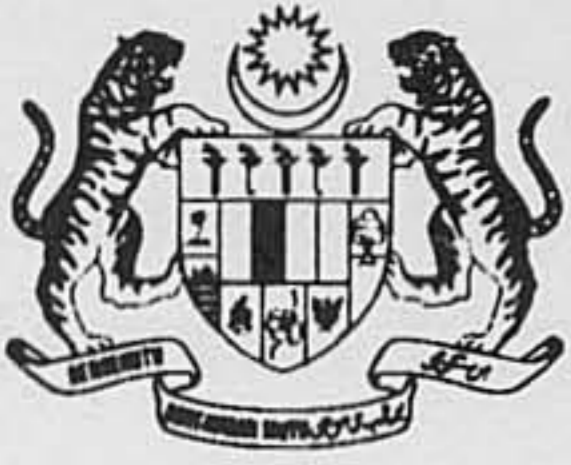
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PRIME MINISTER
MALAYSIA

MESSAGE

Malaysia has long ignored the vast biological resources that lie hidden in its magnificent rainforests. Hand in hand with this biological wealth is the vast experience of traditional indigenous healing systems that have been used some thousands of years for therapeutic purposes. This rich knowledge is one of the most important contributing factors in providing modern science new sources of valuable pharmacological compounds of natural origin. Scientific progress and deep insight into the unexploited potentials of our country's flora for pharmaceutical and curative purposes have led to greatly renewed interest in the potentialities of medicinal and aromatic plants.

With the rapid development and modernisation of our country, the quality of life has increased tremendously and Malaysians are now more knowledgeable and health conscious. As such, the science of herbal medicine cannot stand alone by itself. There is a need for integration of various disciplines to make the herbal industry a more scientific one that will eventually lead it to international recognition in terms of safety, quality and efficacy.

The recent establishment of two National Committees on medicinal plants (National Medicinal Plant Committee and the MIGHT Interest Group on Herbs) has brought about smart partnerships between the industries, researchers and universities. To facilitate the herbal industries to penetrate the international market, there is need to identify commercially viable medicinal plant species with efficacies that have been scientifically validated.

This publication is indeed timely as it offers not only valuable information pertaining to some thirty important local medicinal herbs but also a comprehensive taxonomical identification of local species supplemented with scientific findings from pharmacological properties and clinical trials.



DR MAHATHIR BIN MOHAMAD

Putrajaya

23 October 1999

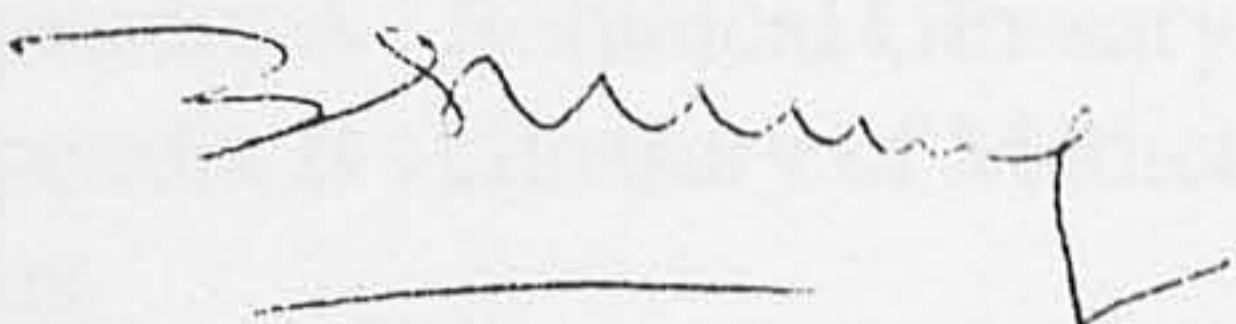
Message From The Director General, MARDI.



Malaysia has a living heritage of a vast diversity of plant species, out of which 1200 has been reported to have therapeutic properties. The therapeutic properties of medicinal plants in many cases are due to the presence of secondary metabolites, which are particularly rich in our tropical rainforest due to the vigorous and competitive conditions they live in. In order to ensure sustainable production of these species and the utilization of their metabolites, there is a need to conserve these plants and at the same time have their potentialities thoroughly investigated for the use in the health care industry.

This living treasure of medicinal plants can only be proven to be beneficial and contribute positively to mankind if they are subjected to proper scientific studies and catalogued in a systematic manner. Such studies have been proven to be more useful if the ethnobotanical approach is taken rather than through random screening. Together with their ethnobotanical information, it is also crucial that these plants be documented with the potential chemical and pharmacological principles they contain. To achieve this objective, a scientific endeavor to integrate a study of botany, chemistry and pharmacology is vital.

This publication documents the results of such a study on 30 important medicinal plants. It also contains information on cultural practices and market demand of these potential herbs; facts which may be useful in the development of the herbal industry. This book in fact covers a wide range of disciplines ranging from pharmaceutical and clinical sciences to botany and agriculture with integration of economics. It is targeted for the scientific, industrial communities and also the public at large with the aim of assisting those interested to discover the wealth of our natural heritage.


(DATO' DR. MD. SHARIF AHMAD)