

Through its "Traditional Health Program" the Department of Health endorses Ten Herbal Medicines in the Philippines. All this ten (10) herbs have been thoroughly tested and have been clinically proven to have medicinal value in the relief and treatment of various ailments. All this Ten Herbal Medicines will be featured here at the Lorma Wellness and Integrative Medicine Center website from October 2010 to July 2011.

For the Month of October



Herbal Medicine: Akapulko / Acapulco

Akapulko / Acapulco (*Cassia alata*) - also known as "bayabas-bayabasan" and "ringworm bush" in English, this herbal medicine is used to treat ringworms and skin fungal infections. Akapulko or Acapulco in English is a shrub found throughout the Philippines. It is known under various names in different regions in the country. Locals call the plant *katanda*, *andadasi*, and *palochina* in Tagalog, Ilocos and in the Visayas regions, respectively. The shrub belongs to the family of *Leguminosae*, and grows about one to two meters tall. It has thick branches and the leaves are embraced with 8 to 20 leaflets that are oblong-elliptical in shape. The flowers of the Akapulko have oblong sepals, and its fruits are tetragonal, which are also winged and glabrous. A medicinal herb that contains chrysophanic acid, a fungicide used to treat fungal infections, like ringworms, scabies, and eczema. Akapulko also contains saponin, a laxative that is useful in expelling intestinal parasites.

The primary part used for herbal purposes are the leaves, although the roots and flowers are also used for certain preparations with medicinal value. The extracts from the Akapulko plant is commonly used as an ingredient for lotions, soaps, and shampoos.

Benefits & Treatment of Akapulko

External Use:

Treatment of skin diseases:

Tinea infections, insect bites, ringworms, eczema, scabies and itchiness.

- Mouthwash in stomatitis

Internal use:

Expectorant for bronchitis and dyspnoea

- Alleviation of asthma symptoms

- Used as diuretic and purgative

- For cough & fever

- As a laxative to expel intestinal parasites and other stomach problems.

Note: A strong decoction of Akapulko leaves is an abortifacient. Pregnant women should not take decoction of the leaves or any part of this plant.

Preparation and Use

- For external use, pound the leaves of the Akapulko plant, squeeze the juice and apply on affected areas.
- As the expectorant for bronchitis and dyspnoea, drink decoction (soak and boil for 10 to 15 minutes) of Akapulko leaves. The same preparation may be used as a mouthwash, stringent, and wash for eczema.
- As laxative, cut the plant parts (roots, flowers, and the leaves) into a manageable size then prepare a decoction Note: The decoction loses its potency if not used for a long time. Dispose leftovers after one day.
- The pounded leaves of Akapulko has purgative functions, specifically against ringworms.

It should be noted that the pounded leaves of this plant may be applied thinly on the affected part twice a day. Marked improvement may be expected after two to three weeks of continuous application to the affected area(s) where the prepared Akapulko leaves were applied.

Source: <http://www.philippineherbalmedicine.org/akapulko.htm>