Plants Used in Mexican Traditional Medicine

Their Application and Effects In Traditional Healing Practices

Text by

Armando González Stuart, Ph.D.
Herbal Research Coordinator
UTEP/ UT Austin Cooperative Pharmacy Program
Acknowledgements

- We would like to thank Ms Sarah Schoofield, of *México Desconocido* magazine, for her generous permission to use the beautiful photographs, drawings and maps, which have appeared in various publications of that magazine.
- The majority of the photos, drawings, and maps presented here are the work of photographers, artists and scientists including: Abigaíl Aguilar-MS, Lorenzo Armendáriz, Salatiel Barragán, Robert Bye-PhD, André Cabrolier, Rafael Doniz, Ignacio Guevara, Franz Mahler, Ruben Morante, Oscar Pastor Ojeda, Manuel Sarmiento, Nicolás Triedo and Santiago Xolapa.
Disclaimer

- This presentation is not intended to promote any plant to be used for therapeutic purposes.
- It is merely a compilation of herbal use by Mexican Traditional Medicine.
- Very few of these plants have ever been studied in depth, so little is known about their efficacy or possible side effects.

**Warning:** Do not self-medicate with any herb. Consult your health provider first.
Introduction

- Mexico has a rich tradition of herbal use that predates the European conquest by many centuries.
- Mexico's medicinal herbal repertoire is one of the world's most diverse and contains various native plants, as well as many other species introduced from diverse parts of the globe.
- Approximately 3,000 to 5,000 plants (both native and introduced) are currently used medicinally by 52 different ethnicities throughout the country.
Medicinal Plants in Mexico

- The Aztec civilization of Mexico was the only one in the New World to record the use of medicinal herbs.
- They did so in “codices” or catalogues that showed drawings of the plants.

Courtesy of México Desconocido magazine
Codices containing information about Aztec medicinal plants were considered “heretical”, and burned by Spanish missionaries.
A few missionaries had the vision of recuperating at least a small portion of this knowledge and reconstructing two codices.

One was written, both in Latin and Náhuatl (the Aztec language) and known as the De La Cruz-Badiano Codex.

It became the first bilingual publication of the New World (1552).
Codices

- These codices were taken to Italy and forgotten for more than 300 years.
- They were “rediscovered” until the twentieth century.
- Some of the plants pictured in the codices are still used in the same way today.

Courtesy of México Desconocido magazine
Mexico's rugged landscape includes a great diversity of plants, animals and fungi.

Unfortunately, very few Mexican plants have ever been studied in detail regarding their medicinal potential.

Deforestation, ill-planned urban expansion, uncontrolled livestock grazing, and desertification are currently threatening Mexico's natural resources, including the survival of various medicinal plants.
Mexico has a rich diversity of medicinal plants

Map courtesy of México Desconocido magazine
Some medicinal plants may have a mystical significance in Mexican traditional healing practices.
The peyote cactus has been used for centuries in various religious ceremonies.
Medicinal plants are used in various types of healing practices throughout Mexico
Traditional healers view some plants as important spiritual entities.
Drying herbs in the traditional way
The Marketplace

- In Mexico, marketplaces are important areas of sale and distribution for medicinal herbs.
- Since before Columbus, markets have provided medicinal plants to people, as well as advice from vendors and healers on how to use them.
- Whether to instill or break a magic spell, or for direct medicinal purposes to cure a specific disease, herbs are still very important in the lives of millions of people.
Aztec marketplace

Courtesy of México Desconocido magazine
Modern market in Mexico City

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido magazine
Medicinal Plants in Mexico

Traditional Uses and Applications
Achiote, Annato
*Bixa orellana* - Bixaceae

- Measles (ground seeds applied to bath)
- Buccal sores (seeds steeped in water, as rinse)
- Condiment and food coloring

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido magazine*
Ahuehuete, Sabino
Taxodium mucronatum - Taxodiaceae

- Burns (bark decoction, poultice)

- Diarrhea (leaf infusion, as tea)

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido magazine
Ahuehuete tree

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido magazine
Ailé, Birch
*Alnus arguta* - Betulaceae

- Fever
- Inflammation
- As a poultice to wash wounds

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Alamo *Platanus lindeliana*  
Platanaceae

- Colds (ground leaves with oil applied topically as poultice)
- Fractures
- Headache

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Anís  *Tagetes lucida* Cav.  
*Asteraeae*

- Carminative, digestive
- Inflammatory, fever
- “Empacho” (Stomach upset)
- Avoid in pregnancy
- Unrelated to European or Star Anise

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Añíl, Indigo *Indigofera suffruticosa*
Fabaceae

- Urinary problems
- Constipation
- Mange
- Syphilis

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
**Anona** *Anona reticulata*  
**Anonaceae**

- Boils (leaf infusion as a wash)
- Diarrhea (bark decoction as tea)
Árnica del país, Falsa árnica

*Heterotheca inuloides* - Asteraceae

- Bruises, contusions (topically)
- Tea as gargles for sore throat
- Potentially toxic, avoid internal use
- Avoid in pregnancy and lactation
- Not to be confused with European arnica, with which it shares some of its applications

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
“Azafrán”, Zacatlaxcale
*Cuscuta* spp.- Convolvulaceae

- Parasitic plant
- Purgative internally
- Fright (“susto”)
  (plant decoction, as bath)

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Baja tripa
*Rivina humilis* - *Phytolaccaceae*

- “Aire” (Wind)
- “Espanto” (Fright)
- Rash (prickly heat)
- Branch decoction applied externally as body wash

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Baiborín
*Kallstroema grandiflora* - *Zygophyllaceae*

- Fatigue
- Fever
- Body pains
- Mange

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Barbasco, Cabeza de negro
*Dioscorea spp.* - Dioscoreaceae

- Body aches
- Menstrual problems
- Progesterone source
- Rheumatism, aches (rhizome steeped in alcohol, as a rub)
- Male contraceptive

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Barquilla

*Rhoeo discolor* - Commelinaceae

- Fungal infections: roasted leaves, topical
- Vaginal infections: leaf infusion douche
- Measles (leaf infusion, orally)

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Batamote *Baccharis glutinosa*
Asteraceae

- Alopecia
- Stomach ache
- Mange
- Foot odor

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Bayetilla *Hamelia patens*
Rubiaceae

- Anti inflammatory
- Boils (stem decoction, externally)
- Pain relief (topical)
- Yellow fever (leaf infusion as tea)

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Berro *Nasturtium acuaticum*
Brassicaceae

- Goiter (iodide)
- Kidney pain
- Stomach inflammation (raw)
- Tuberculosis (infusion)

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Bretónica *Lepechinia caulescens*
Lamiaceae

- Diarrhea
- Dysentery (stem decoction)
- Gastritis (topical)

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Cabezona, Chapúz

*Helium mexicanum* - Asteraceae

- Colds (pulverized flowerheads as stornutatories; to promote sneezing)
- Toxic if ingested
- Avoid use
**Cacaloxóchitl** *Plumeria rubra*
*Apocynaceae*

External application:
- Gonorrhea
- Warts
- Wounds (minor)
- Drastic purgative
- Avoid internally

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Cahuayote *Gonolobus niger*
Asclepiadaceae

- Gonorrhea (root decoction)
- Efficacy unknown
- Avoid during pregnancy and lactation
Calaguala *Phlebodium aureum*
Polypodiaceae

- Tea made from stem
- Diarrhea
- Gastric ulcers
- Kidney pain
- Efficacy unknown
- Avoid in pregnancy
Calderona *Galphimia glauca*
Malpighiaceae

- Boils (external application)
- Vaginal infections
- Wounds
- Avoid in pregnancy
Candelilla *Euphorbia antisypillitica*

- Used against venereal disease (syphilis)
- Cathartic (purgative)
- Toothache
- Headache
- Avoid in pregnancy and lactation

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Capulín *Prunus serotina*
Rosaceae

- Coughs (children)
- Decoction of stems and leaves taken as infusion (tea)

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Cedro *Cedrela odorata* Meliaceae

- Colic
- Epilepsy (bark decoction as tea)
- Fever
- Gall bladder
- Toothache (leaf tea)
Ceiba *Ceiba pentandra*
Bombacaceae

- Anti inflammatory
- Boils
- Insect bites
- Mange
- Bark and leaf decoctions as poultices

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Chabacal *Salvia lavanduloides*
*Lamiaceae*

- Bronchitis
- Colds
- Coughs
- Avoid in pregnancy

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Chaca  *Bursera simaruba*
Burseraceae

- Fever (leaf infusion)
- Leaves boiled in water to make a bath
- Leaves applied on soles of feet

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Chalahuite *Inga jinicuil*
Fabaceae

- Dysentery (bark decoction)
- Stomach upset ("empacho")
- Flower infusion taken for tachycardia ("latido")

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Chaparro amargoso
*Castela tortuosa*-Simaroubiaceae

- Amoebic dysentery
- Avoid during pregnancy/lactation
- Shrublands in northern México

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Chapuliztle *Dodonaea viscosa*
Sapindaceae

- Colic (leaf infusion)
- Fever (bark decoction)
- Gout (leaf infusion)
- Ground leaves applied to scabs and wounds
- Scalp problems
- Venereal disease
Chaya *Cnidoscolus chayamansa*
Euphorbiaceae

- Boils (latex topically)
- Diabetes
- Kidney pain
- Obesity (capsules)

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Chicalote  \textit{Argemone mexicana}, \textit{A. sanguinea}  Papaveraceae

- Papaverine
- Hypnotic
- Post-part. bleeding
- Toothache
- Alopecia (hair loss)
- Kidney pain
- Seeds are toxic

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Chicozapote *Achras zapota*
Zapotaceae

- Ingestion of more than 10 seeds can be toxic
Chicura *Franseria ambrosioides* 
*Asteraceae*

- Promotes labor
- Given near parturition
- External application to treat scorpion stings
- Avoid in pregnancy and lactation

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Chigüisa *Pseudobombax ellipticum*
Bombacaceae

- Asthma
- Colds
- Coughs flower
  infusion taken
  as tea

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Chipilín *Crotalaria incana*  
**Fabaceae**

- Urinary bladder “coldness”
- May contain cyanogenic glycosides
- May contain pyrrolizidine alkaloids
- Avoid in pregnancy

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Cholla, Cardenche, Coyonoxtle
*Opuntia imbricata* - Cactaceae

- Tea taken to treat asthma
- Tea used against diarrhea (plant contains tannins)

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Chote, Turi  Parmentiera edulis  
Bignoniaceae

- Diabetes (root decoction as tea)
- Earache
- Urinary problems (fruit and branch infusion)
- Respiratory ailments (flower, fruit and root infusion)

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Codo de fraile, Yóyotl
*Thevetia thevetioides* - Apocynaceae

- Boils and hemorrhoids (topically)
- “Weight loss” (seed)
- Alkaloids (thevetine)
- Very toxic, avoid all internal use
Cojón de toro
*Stemmadenia donnell-smithii*
Apocynaceae

- Bruises, wounds (leaf decoction externally as poultice)
- Mosquito bites (latex applied topically)
- Avoid internally

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Cola de caballo *Equisetum arvense*

Equisetaceae

- Arthritis and rheumatism
- Diuretic
- Urinary problems
- Only the sterile branches are used
- Some species are thiaminase inhibitors

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Cola de venado
*Erigeron karwinskianus* - Asteraceae

- Dysentery
- Kidney pain (stem decoction)
- Sores (wash)

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Contrayerba

*Dorstenia contrajerba* - *Moraceae*

- Snakebite
- Vaginal hemorrhage
- Venereal disease (root decoction as tea)

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Cordón de San Antonio

*Hyptis stellulata* - Lamiaceae

- Earache
- Indigestion
- “Pasmo”
- Rheumatism
- Skin infections
- Avoid in pregnancy

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Cordon de San Francisco

Salvia leucanthera - Lamiaceae

- Fright (espanto)
- To reconstitute women after birth (leaf infusion)
- Avoid in pregnancy

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Cosáhui, Mamelique, Crameria Krameria grayi - Krameriaceae

- Diarrhea
- Skin antiseptic
- Diabetes
- Alopecia
- Loose teeth

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Cuachalalate o Axocopaque
*Amphypteringium adstringens* - Julianaceae

- Circulatory ailments, mixed with sassinizarilla
- Gastritis, peptic ulcers
- Vaginal infections (topical)
- Bark decoction or maceration
Cuátecomate, Guaje
*Crescentia cujete* - Bignoniaceae

- Alopecia (leaf infusion)
- Diarrhea (leaf infusion)
- Expectorant (fruit pulp)
- Liver ailments (fruit pulp)

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Cucharitas *Acacia cochlicanthera*
*Fabaceae*

- Diarrhea
- Stomach ache
- Urinary bladder

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Cuitlacoche *Ustilago maydis*

- This a fungus, not a green plant
- Parasite of corncobs
- Eaten as a delicacy
- May contain alkaloids that stimulate uterus
- Avoid in pregnancy
Culantrillo de pozo, Palmita
*Adiantum capillus-veneris*  Pteridaceae

- Leaf infusion as a tea
- Emmenagogue (promotes menstruation)
- Fright (susto)
- Kidney stones
- May cause abortion
- Avoid in pregnancy and lactation

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Cundeamor *Momordica charantia* Cucurbitaceae

- Diabetes (fruit and leaves)
- Anthelminthic
- Fever, Colic and headache
- Avoid in pregnancy and lactation

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
**Damiana** *Turnera diffusa*

**Turneraceae**

- Tea taken to “increase libido”, treat sterility, as a tonic for fatigue
- For colds and body aches
- May have antidepressant action
- Avoid in pregnancy

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Diente de león, Dandelion

*Taraxacum officinale* - Asteraceae

- Tea made from plant is used to treat gall bladder and liver ailments, anorexia
- Digestive, diuretic
- Externally, latex removes warts (irritating)

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Doradilla, Resurrection plant
Selaginella lepidophylla
Selaginellaceae

- Diuretic
- Gall bladder stones
- Kidney pain
- Urinary problems
- Combined with horsetail (Equisetum)

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Encino, Oak

*Quercus spp.* - Fagaceae

- Astringent (tannins)
- Bleeding gums
- Loose teeth
- Skin antiseptic
- Toothache
- Bark decoction

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Epazote, Wormseed
*Chenopodium ambrosioides*

- Tea is taken to treat stomach ailments and expel worms
- Avoid in pregnancy, lactation, and children
- Leaves are safe as condiment, but oil is neurotoxic

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Epazote de Zorrillo
*C. graveolens* - Chenopodiaceae

- Anthelminthic
- “Aire” (flatulence)
- Coughs (expectorant)
- “Fright” (espanto)
- Stomach and liver ailments
- Potentially toxic, avoid use

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Espinosilla  *Loeselia mexicana*

**Polemoniaceae**

External application for:
- Alopecia
- Dandruff
- Erysipelas
- Aerial parts as infusion (tea)
**Estafiate** *Artemisia mexicana*  
*Asteraceae*

- Tea made from leaves and stems is used to treat stomachache, diarrhea, worms and rheumatism.
- Avoid in pregnancy and lactation.
- Avoid in patients with nervous disorders.

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Estropajo, Luffa
*Luffa aegyptica* - Cucurbitaceae

- Gerícua (leaf infusion as bath)
- Lice (mashed fruit in water, as hair rinse)

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Flor de manita, Macpalxóchitl

*Chirantodendron pentadactylon*

Sterculiaceae

- Tea from flowers
- Anxiety, Nerves
- Cardiac ailments

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Flor de tila, Linden *Tilia* spp.
Tilaceae

- Anxiety
- Insomnia
- Nervous disorders
- Flower infusion

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Garañona *Castilleja tenuiflora*
Scrophulariaceae

- Alopecia
- “Blood purifier”
- Gall bladder
- Vaginal infections

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Girasol, Sunflower
*Helianthus annuus* - *Asteraceae*

- Headache
- Nervous disorders (anxiety)
- Scabs

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Gobernadora, Guámis, Creosote bush, “Chaparral” *Larrea tridentata* Zygophyllaceae

- Athlete’s foot
- Cancer (antioxidant)
- Foot odor
- Fungal skin infection
- Kidney stones
- Urinary infections
- Venereal disease

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Creosote bush, “Chaparral”

- NDGA, active principle
- Free radical scavenger
- Antifungal compounds

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Creosote bush, “Chaparral”

- Non-concentrated infusion internally
- Concentrated forms not recommended
- Pills and capsules may cause hepatic and renal damage

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Creosote bush, “Chaparral”

- Avoid prolonged treatments
- Avoid in pregnancy, lactation and small children
- Topical applications may cause irritation

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Gordolobo, Everlasting
*Gnaphalium spp.* - Asteraceae

- Similar properties as unrelated Mullein (*Verbascum spp.*)
- Respiratory problems, asthma, coughs
- Lumbago (externally)
- Avoid in pregnancy

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Guaco
Mikania spp. - Asteraceae

- Stomach ulcers, liver problems
- Worms
- “Antidote” vs. snakebites (unproven, avoid)
- Avoid in pregnancy and lactation
Guamúchil *Pithecellobium dulce*  
Fabaceae

- Diarrhea
- Upset stomach
- Coughs
- Buccal sores

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Guanacastle

*Enterolobium cyclocarpum* - Fabaceae

- Red caterpillar sting (bark decoction applied directly to affected area)

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Guayaba, Guava
*Psidium guava* - Myrtaceae

- Diarrhea (Tannins)
- Stomach upset
- Excellent source of Vitamin C

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Guayacán, Palo Santo
*Guaiacum sanctum* - Zygophyllaceae

- Coughs (flowers as tea)
- Dysentery
- Diaphoretic
- Gastric ulcers
- Syphilis
- Tuberculosis
Guázuza *Guazuma ulmifolia*
Sterculiaceae

- Diarrhea
- Fever
- Antiemetic
- The fruits contain mucilage

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Guázuma \textit{Guazuma tomentosa}  
Sterculiaceae

- Leprosy
- Elephantiasis
- Syphilis
- Skin infections

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Helecho macho, Male fern
*Dryopteris filix-mas*

- Anthelminthic, obsolete in modern phytotherapy
- May cause abortion
- Avoid in pregnancy and lactation
- Avoid in children
Hierba de la víbora
*Zorrica spp.* - Asteraceae

- Taken as tea to treat “Pasmo”
- Antidote vs. poisoning
- Anti-inflammatory (topical application)
Hierba del cáncer
*Cuphea aequipetala* - Lythraceae

- Antiseptic
- Boils, skin “tumors”
- Diarrhea (leaf infusion)
- Wounds
- Avoid in pregnancy
- Avoid in children

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Hierba del carbonero
Baccharis sarothroides - Asteraceae

- Colds
- Muscular pain

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Hierba del golpe

*Oenothera rosea* - Onagraceae

- Bruises (topically)
- Colic (infusion)
- Skin inflammation (poultice, topically)

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Hierba del pollo (Matláli)
Commelina stans - Commelinaceae

- Arthritis (topically)
- Colic
- To treat diarrhea, the leaves are blended with water, lime juice and honey
- Hemostatic; fresh crushed leaves applied directly to cut

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Hierba del zorrillo

*Petiveria alliacea* - Phytolaccaceae

- Fever
- Seizures
- Weakness
- Avoid in small children, pregnancy and lactation

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Hierba de San Francisco
*Heimia salicifolia* - Lithraceae

- Bruises, inflammation (ground leaves applied topically as plaster)
- Cold bladder (branch decoction as bath)
Hierba Luisa  Aloysia triphylla  Verbenaceae

- Tea from leaves is taken to treat anxiety, diarrhea and stomach upset
- Leaves have citrus-like aroma
Higuerilla, Ricino, Castor oil, Palma christi)

*Ricinus communis* - Euphorbiaceae

- Fever, headache
- Purgative
- Seeds very poisonous
- Lectins cause hemagglutination of red blood cells
- Avoid internal use
Hoja santa Tlanepaquelite, Momo  
*Piper sanctum* - *Piperaceae*

- Tea from stems and leaves is used to treat “susto” or fright

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Huinólo, Chiráhui
Acacia cuchliacanta - Fabaceae

- Colds
- Diarrhea
- Gastritis
- Typhoid fever
- Urinary problems

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Huizache *Acacia farnesiana*

**Fabaceae**

- Diabetes
- Diarrhea
- Dyspepsia (flowers)
- Fever
- Kidney pain
- Tuberculosis (root)

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Hule  Castilleja elastica
Moraceae

- Dislocations
- Fractures
- Latex applied topically
- “Vilmas” (bandages)
Flor de Jamaica, Hibiscus, Roselle

*Hibiscus sabdariffa* - Malvaceae

- May lower cholesterol
- Diuretic
- Fever
- Laxative, digestive

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Lágrimas de San Pedro, Job’s tears

*Coix lachryma-jobi* - Poaceae

- Tea from the leaves is used to treat diabetes
Madroño *Arbutus xalapensis*
Ericaceae

- Kidney pain
- Leaf decoction
- Ingested as tea
- Avoid in pregnancy

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Magnolia *Magnolia grandiflora*
Magnoliaceae

- Cardiac problems
- Nerves
- Seizures
- Avoid in pregnancy

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Maguey, Century plant
*Agave spp.*  *Agavaceae*

- The leaf juice is taken internally to treat constipation and other digestive ailments
- Aguamiel (sugar extract from root) used against gonorrhea

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Mangle rojo *Rhizophora mangle* Rhizophoraceae

- Diabetes
- Dysentery
- Kidney pain (bark decoction as tea)

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Mango *Mangifera indica*
Anacardiaceae

- Originally from Asia
- Mouth infections
  (seed decoction as mouthwash)
- Stomachache (bark decoction as tea)
Mata ratón, Cocoíte
Gliricidia sepium - Fabaceae

- Fever
- Stomach upset
- Leaves are used as rodent poison
- Avoid internally

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Mezquite *Prosopis juliflora*
Fabaceae

- Boils (leaves)
- Conjunctivitis (leaves)
- Stomach upset
Muicle *Justicia spicigera*
Acanthaceae

- Tea from aerial parts taken to treat constipation
- Mange (branch decoction applied topically)
- Rash

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Nanche *Byrsonima crassifolia*
Malpighiaceae

- Astringent action used to treat diarrhea
- Fungal infections of the gums
- Loose teeth

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Nopal, Prickly pear cactus
*Opuntia spp.*  Cactaceae

- Stems eaten raw or cooked to treat diabetes
- Stems contain mucilage and fiber
- Pulverized cactus capsules taken to lower cholesterol
- Digestive
- Obesity (fiber)

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Nopal duraznillo
*Opuntia leucotricha* - Cactaceae

- Stem eaten to treat diabetes
- Diarrhea
- Urinary problems

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Ocote colorado *Pinus patula*
Pinaceae

- Sore throat (hoarseness)
- Branch decoction taken as tea
- Colds

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Palo bobo *Ipomoea arborescens*
Convolvulaceae

- Cardiac problems
- Fever
- Spleen
- “Madness”
- Toxic to ruminants (causes emaciation)
Palo de Brasil

*Haematoxylon brasiletto* - Fabaceae

- Tea made from branches taken to treat depression, fever and urinary problems (infections, kidney stones)

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Palo de Campeche, Tinto
*Haematoxylon campechianum* - Fabaceae

- Branch decoction taken as tea to treat:
  - Diarrhea and dysentery
  - Venereal disease (“blood purifier”)

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Palo fierro *Olneya tesota*
Fabaceae

- Asthma
- Fever
- Loose teeth
- Stomach ache

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
A decoction of the bark is taken as tea against fever.
Palo mulato *Bursera grandifolia*
*Burseraceae*

- Headache
- Stomachache
  (branch decoction applied topically as poultice)

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Papayo
Carica papaya - Caricaceae

- Asthma (boiled leaves as plaster)
- Digestive (pulp)
- Insect bite (latex)
- Meat tenderizer (seeds)
- Seeds used to expel worms
Pata de vaca *Bauhinia divaricata*
Fabaceae

- Asthma
- “Cesido”
- Dysentery
- “Empacho”
- Icterus
- Worms

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Pegarropa, Pegajosa
Mentziella hispida - Loasaceae

- Venereal disease
- Depurative
- Purgative
- Avoid in pregnancy

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Pica - pica
*Mucuna pruriens* - Fabaceae

- The “hairs” covering pod are mixed with porridge or soft cheese to expel worms
- This product is ingested before breakfast
- Avoid in pregnancy
- Allergenic to skin
Pingüica  *Ehretia tinifolia*  
Boraginaceae

- Leaves and fruits used to make tea for treatment of urinary ailments

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Piñoncillo *Jatropha curcas*

*Euphorbiaceae*

- Abortifacient
- Candidiasis (oral)
- Oral infections
- Purgative (latex and roasted seeds)
- Potentially toxic
- Avoid internally

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Pirúl, Arbol del Perú
_Schinus molle_ - Anacardiaceae

- Tea made from leaves is used to treat diverse ailments including: colic, conjunctivitis, coughs, gonorrhea, rheumatism and tuberculosis
- The plant can be a skin allergen
Pitahaya

*Lemaireocereus thurberi* - Cactaceae

- Tea made from the plant used to treat diabetes
- Snakebite (unproven treatment)
- Stings

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Plátano, Banana *Musa sapientum*

Musaceae

- Fruit is used to treat gall bladder ailments and diarrhea
- Fruit peel decoction taken as tea
- Fruit is rich source of potassium and carbohydrates

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Pongolote *Cochlospermum vitifolium*
Cochlospermaceae

- Enemas (bark decoction) for digestive problems and body cleansing

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Puán *Muntingia calabura*
Eleocarpaceae

A decoction made from the plant is used externally to treat measles, urticaria and skin infections.
Quelite, Bledo, Lamb’s quarters
*Amaranthus hybridus* - Amaranthaceae

- Tea made from the plant is used to treat diarrhea and intestinal hemorrhages
- Leaves are edible, but may contain oxalates
- Externally, the leaves are applied as a poultice to treat skin infections

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Quiebra muelas, Milkweed
Asclepias curassavica - Asclepiadaceae

- Boils (leaf poultice applied topically)
- Toothache (latex applied topically)
- Avoid internal use, potentially toxic

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
**Ramón** *Brosimum alicastrum*
*Moraceae*

- Boils (bark decoction as tea or wash)
- Coughs
- Kidney pain (leaf decoction as tea)

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Roble *Tabebuia rosea*
Bignoniaceae

- Callous feet (bark applied topically)
- Fever
- Rheumatism
  (branch decoction applied as bath)

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Salvia, Sage

_Salvia spp._ - Lamiaceae

- Tea from leaves is used to treat menstrual problems such as hot flashes in menopause
- Topically as skin antiseptic
- Avoid in pregnancy and lactation
Salvia, Sage

- Essential oil is neurotoxic, avoid in epilepsy
- Avoid in patients with high blood pressure
- Avoid in small children
Sangre de drago, Sangregrado
*Jatropha dioica* - Euphorbiaceae

- Applied topically for alopecia and dandruff
- Branch decoction as rinse or mouthwash
- Avoid internally
- Drastic purgative
Sangre de grado
*Croton draco* - Euphorbiaceae

- Latex from the branch and fruit applied topically to treat candidiasis and stomatitis
- Avoid internally
- Drastic purgative

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Saúco, Mexican elder
*Sambucus mexicana* - Caprifoliaceae

- Arthritis and rheumatism (leaves-externally)
- Coughs, bronchitis (flowers-infusion)
- Expectorant
- Whooping cough

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
**Saúco, Elder**

- Unripe berries may cause digestive upset (diarrhea, vomiting)

- Avoid bark, root or berries in small children, as well as during pregnancy and lactation

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Sávila, Zábila, Aloe

*Aloe spp.* - Liliaceae

- Gel is emollient and used topically for skin cuts, infections and burns (usually safe)
- Latex is purgative, used to treat constipation and diabetes, but may cause toxicity

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Sávila, Zábila, Aloe

- Leaf preparations may cause uterine contractions, avoid in pregnancy and lactation
- Avoid internally, it may be irritating to intestine and kidneys

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Tabachín *Caesalpinia pulcherrima*
Fabaceae

- Flower infusion (tea) is used to treat coughs and a condition known as “Oguío”

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Tabaco coyote, Wild tobacco

* Nicotiana glauca - Solanaceae

- Arthritis (topical)
- Asthma (smoked)
- Fever (leaves applied on stomach)
- Headache (leaves applied on temples)

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Tabaco coyote, T. cimarron

- Contains nicotine
- Avoid in pregnancy, lactation, and in small children
Taray *Eysenhardtia polystachya*
Leguminosae

The bark is used as a tea (diuretic)
Táscate, Juniper
Juniperus deppeana - Pinaceae

- Neuralgia – rheumatism (topical)
- Nocturnal enuresis in children
- Avoid in pregnancy and lactation
- Avoid internal use

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Tatachinole
_Tournefortia hartwegiana_ - Boraginaceae

- A decoction from the roots is taken to treat coughs, kidney stones, parasites and rheumatism

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Tepescohuite
*Mimosa tenuiflora* - Fabaceae

- Burns, wounds
  (pulverized bark, applied topically)

- Gastritis, ulcers
  (bark decoction as tea)

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Texcalama, Amate
*Ficus petiolaris* - Moraceae

- Chest pains
- Emetic (root)
- Fractures (topical)
- Cathartic
- Stomatitis (latex)
- Emetic (root)
- Avoid in pregnancy

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Tlachichinole *Kohleria deppeana*
Gesneriaciae

- A tea made from the branches is taken to treat gastrointestinal inflammation and kidney pain

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Tlatlancuaya Irisine celosia
Amaranthaceae

- Anti inflammatory
- Diaphoretic
- Fever
- Insect bites
- Typhoid fever
- Typhus

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Toje  *Phoradendron californicum*
Loranthaceae

- Used to treat boils, diarrhea and venereal disease
- Potentially toxic
- Avoid in pregnancy
- May cause hypotension

Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine
Toloache *Datura stramonium*  
Solanaceae

- Asthma (smoked as cigarettes)
- Applied topically for skin boils
- Hallucinogenic (seeds)
- Rheumatism (topical)
- Used in ethnic rituals
- Toxic, Avoid Use

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Tronador  *Kalanchoe pinnata*  
Crassulaceae

- African plant
- Anti inflammatory
- Burns (topically)
Tulipán *Hibiscus sinensis*
Malvaceae

- “Ascedio”
- Candidiasis (thrush)
Tulipán de monte

*Malvaviscus arboreus* - Malvaceae

- Dysentery
- Gall bladder ailments
- Stomachache
Tumbavaqueros *Ipomoea stans*
Convolvulaceae

- Epilepsy
- Hepatitis
- Nervousness
- Root decoction

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Uña de gato *Martynia annua*
Martyniaceae

- Epilepsy (seed decoction)
- Unrelated to plant from South America with the same common name (*Uncaria tomentosa*)

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Vara Blanca

*Croton fragilis* - Euphorbiaceae

- Diarrhea
- Purgative
- Stomach upset
- Malaria
  (bark decoction as tea)

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Wereke, Guareque
*Ibervillea sonorae* - Cucurbitaceae

- The dried root is used to make a decoction to treat diabetes
- Pulverized root is applied to skin as an antiseptic
- Avoid in pregnancy and lactation

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Zapo, Lomboy blanco
*Jatropha cinerea* - Euphorbiaceae

- Scabs and skin infections (leaf decoction)
- Candidiasis (rinse)
- Sap purgative
- Avoid in pregnancy
Zapote blanco, White sapota
Casimiroa edulis - Rutaceae

- A decoction of the seeds and leaves is used to treat insomnia and high blood pressure
- Seeds are hypnotic; toxic in large doses
- Avoid in pregnancy

Photo courtesy of Mexico Desconocido Magazine
**Zacatechichi** *Calea zacatechichi*
*Asteraceae*

- Tea from the leaves promotes appetite and is also used to treat fever and stomach ailments, such as colic, and diarrhea.

*Photo Courtesy of México Desconocido Magazine*
Tea from the leaves is used to promote labor and as a contraceptive.

Avoid in pregnancy and lactation (potentially toxic to both mother and child).

Avoid internally.

Photo by Dr. Robert Bye, from Plantas de México al Mundo
Monterrey, Mexico: Ediciones Castillo; 2000.

Aguilar A. Plantas Medicinales del Centro de México.

Argueta A. Atlas de las Plantas de la Medicina Tradicional Mexicana. 3 Vols.

Cabrera R. Yerbario mexicano.

Mexico City: INAH; 2003.

Mexico City: CONACULTA; 1998.

González M. Plantas Medicinales del Noreste de México.
Monterrey, Mexico: IMSS-Vitro; 1998.

González-Stuart A. Plantas Tóxicas Para El Ganado.
Mexico City: Editorial Limusa; 1990.

Johnson D, Moreno S, Lopez R. Compendio Fitoquímico de La Medicina Tradicional Herbolaria de Sonora.
Hermosillo: Universidad de Sonora; 1996.

Linares E, Flores B, Bye R. Selección de Plantas Medicinales de México.
Mexico City: Limusa; 1994.
Lozoya, X. Plantas Medicinales Prehispánicas.

Lozoya, X. Tziuhpatli: Herba Officinalis.
Mexico City: SSA-UNAM; 1999.

Martínez M. Las Plantas Medicinales de México.

Vázquez, R Plantas Medicinales del Noroeste de México.
Mexico City: Guías México Desconocido # 4; 1999.

Zamora I, Barquin M. Estudio de La Relacion Planta-Hombre En Los Municipios de Mineral del Monte y Mineral del Chico,
Estado de Hidalgo. Pachuca: Gobierno del Estado de Hidalgo; 1997.