

Ampalaya – college essay



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Ampalaya, also called bitter melon, is best known for its traditional use in treating diabetes. This plant also is used to treat psoriasis, intestinal worms, infections and other conditions. That's because, in addition to its blood-sugar lowering action the plant has antibacterial properties, says " Ampalaya," author Frank Murray. Always check with a doctor before trying a new supplement for any purpose.

Ampalaya is traditionally used in parts of Asia, the Amazon and Brazil to treat skin infections, says K. D. Mwambete, author of a study published in " African Health Sciences." The plant also grows in Africa, where it's sometimes used as an anti-viral agent against the hepatitis and measles viruses, Mwambete notes.

Mwambete believes it's important to test plants like ampalaya in attempt to find new ways to fight microbial infections. Several microbial infections, including respiratory infections and bacterial meningitis acquired in hospitals, and diseases such as those that are sexually transmitted are showing resistance to the commonly used antibiotics ampicillin, penicillin and fluoroquinolones. This increasing trend in antibiotic-resistant illnesses is due to several factors including mutations of the microbes, irrational use of antibiotics, poor quality drugs and patient non-compliance, the study author notes.

The plant exhibits antibacterial properties at least in a laboratory setting, says Mwambete, who tested it for action against several types of infection. Mwambete found that the plant may be useful for combating *Escherichia coli*, the common yeast *Candida albicans*, *Salmonella typhi* and

Staphylococcus aureus. It may be useful against Klebsiella pneumoniae as well, Mwambete notes. Klebsiella pneumoniae is frequently a hospital-acquired pathogen. It causes pneumonia, urinary tract infections and intraabdominal infections, according to the Centers for Disease Control.

Ampalaya fruit extracts feature higher antimicrobial activity than leaf extracts do, Mwambete says. Both leaves and fruits contain glycoside, saponins, alkaloids, resin, mucilage and an aromatic volatile oil. The plant's seeds also have an essential oil that has activity against Staphylococcus aureus, says A. Braca, lead author for a study published in the journal "Fitoterapia." Braca found 25 different components in the oil. These include germacrene, apiole and trans-nerolidol.

Ampalaya does not appear effective against every pathogen. For example, it does not appear to combat Cryptococcus neoformans, a yeast, or Proteus vulgaris, which can affect the digestive tract and cause diarrhea, Mwambete says. Infections that are caused by these microorganisms are among the most difficult to treat with existing antibiotics, Mwambete notes.

Uses vary, but may include Enhancing Immune Function, and Reducing Risk of Cancer and are non-FDA reviewed or approved, natural alternatives, to use for Heart Disease, and High Cholesterol. Ampalaya (Bitter Melon) or its scientific name, Momordica charantia has been a folkloric cure for generations but has now been proven to be an effective herbal medicine for many ailments. Ampalaya leaves and fruits are excellent sources of Vitamin B, iron, calcium, and phosphorus. It is also rich in beta carotene. Health benefits from ampalaya leaves.

* Powdered leaves used as astringent to treat haemorrhoids and piles * Sap or juice of leaves used to treat skin problems such as eczema, acne, psoriasis, leprosy and scabies * Pounded leaves used to treat for burns and scald * Infusion of leaves used to treat fever * Infusion used to treat various stomach problems and to improve appetite * Poultice of leaves used to treat headache * Infusion of leaves used as mouthwash to treat tooth ache and other mouth problems