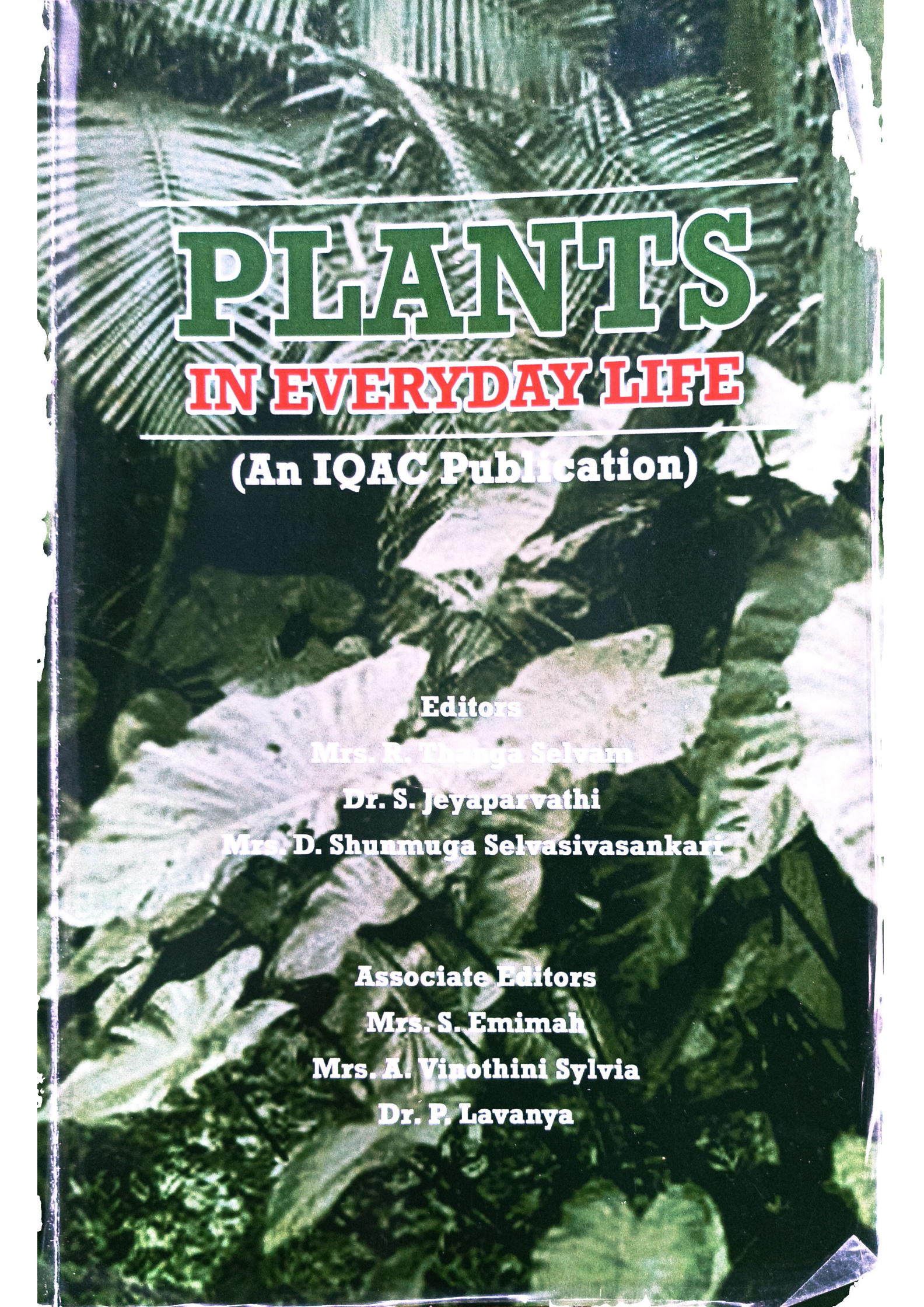




PLANTS

IN EVERYDAY LIFE

(An IQAC Publication)

Editors

Mrs. R. Thanga Selvam

Dr. S. Jeyaparvathi

Mrs. D. Shunmuga Selvasivasankari

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Plants: Natures Most Valuable Gift to Human Kind

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Introduction

Plants have very close bonding with human kind. The relationship between plants and people is a long and continuous one. We need plants for basic human purposes. Plants are one of the most valuable gifts of nature. They are pleasant things in the nature. Not only people get many things from plants, but also animals get many things from them. Planting a sapling is very valuable thing to the world, but many people don't realize this. Humans directly or indirectly depend on plants for several of their needs.

Plants

Plants are living organisms that can live on land or water. They have many different forms such as huge trees, others are herbs or some have bushy form. The basic food for all organisms is produced by green plants. Plants help in maintaining oxygen balance, the most important gas that enable us to breathe. Animals emit carbon dioxide by taking in oxygen. This rise in carbon dioxide levels in air is reduced by plants. Removal of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere reduces the greenhouse effect and global warming. It also maintains the ozone layer that helps protect Earth's life from damaging UV radiation. We eat them in many forms; we make medicines, soaps, furniture, textiles, tyres and much more from them. Plants play a very important role in our lives.

Plants and Human Beings

Plants are best friends. Not only when we had felt happy plants help to us, but also when we had sad plants help to us to live harmony and peacefully. People live with the help of plants. Plants provide good air for us. As well as provide rain for us. Without rain we can't grow our crops. As well as they improve the beauty of nature. So, we must protect plants and grow it more and more.

After having created life and living beings on this planet, Nature has given the correct and healthy environment for the existence and the continuous growth of these shapes of life. The very air we breathe in to live, the food we eat to exist and grow, the water we drink to quench our thirst are all basic gifts of nature, without which life could not have existed and grown on this planet.

Wonders of Plants

Plants play a role in maintaining 'Oxygen' in the air so vital for survival of all living beings on earth; transpiring plants add water vapour in the air resulting in rainfall; wood of plants are used in furniture and they are known for their medicinal properties as well. Everything on the earth is connected to each other and runs through the balance of nature, if there is any disturbance with it, the entire environment can be disrupted and can damage life on earth. The tree protects us from many natural disasters and in many ways it fosters our lives. It keeps our environment clean and green to the earth, therefore, we are also responsible for them and have to do our best to save them. Long and mature trees are more profitable than small trees because they absorb more carbon, greenhouse gases filter at very high rates, adopts storm water, provides big shade and opposes urban heat, energy Reduces the use of etc.

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entire environment can be disrupted and can damage life on earth. The plants protect us from many natural disasters and in many ways it fosters our lives. It keeps our environment clean and green to the earth, therefore, we are also responsible for them and have to do our best to save them. Plants are valuable and important means of life on earth. It plays a vital role for health and business communities on Earth. With all these direct and indirect methods, all these creatures benefit animals too on earth.

Since from Vedic times India is known for its rich nature resources, it was covered with thick forest where our civilization was born and acquired its distinct character. Our people instinctively used natural resources in a way that was favorable to the long term survival of man. The people were free from desire to extend their domain and participated with other creations that gave purpose and joy to living. Absolute isolation from other living forms was not acceptable. It was not power over but participation with other purpose and joy to living. A series of invasions altered the pattern of our existence. We adopted unnatural norms. Everything was subordinated to the specious ideal of making money, and yet more money. This approach filled heavy burden on Mother Nature. Wild life was destroyed; forests uprooted, hill-sides stripped of their thick supply of trees. Warning signals in the form of frequent floods, shortage of timber and famine of forest products are being constantly given by Nature.

Benefits of Plants Food

Dietary guidelines of several countries suggest that plant food, especially fruits and vegetable (FVs) rich in micro/phytonutrients and the much-needed fibre, are the basis for health and wellness of all age groups and prevent several disorders¹. These power-packed nutrient dense colourful foods are

low in calories and rich in nutrients/non-nutrients, which synergistically participate in modifying pathophysiological and metabolic aspects of diseases. These are the much-wanted component of healthy diets and are the best gift from nature to nurture the humankind.

The WHO and the Dietary Guidelines of India suggest 400 g of FVs per day to reduce NCDs and for overall health¹. These enhance the diversity of diet and play a prominent role in the prevention of deficiency disorders and diet-related chronic diseases. About one per cent of disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) and 2.8 per cent of mortality globally are due to low FVs consumption⁴. Worldwide, 5.2 million deaths (3.4 and 1.8 million deaths for FVs, respectively) have been attributed to the inadequate intake of FVs². To improve the FVs intake, focused approaches are required through all stages of life.

Medicinal Benefits of Plants

Medicinal plants like aloe, turmeric, tulsi, pepper, elachi and ginger are commonly used in a number of Ayurvedic home remedies and are considered to be the best aid among fighting ailments related to throat and skin. As a rich source of nutrients, anti-bacterial and antioxidant properties, ayurvedic herbs are non-toxic in nature and so the products or remedies made using them are often recommended for their high therapeutic value. Treatment with herbal medicinal plants also hold a strong ground because these plants are considered to be safe and have no side effects. Since they are in sync with nature, they hold greater advantage over chemically treated products and synthetic medicines. As opposed to other drugs and medicines, Ayurvedic herbs are known to treat the disease from the root and thus aid in keeping you healthy and fit in the long run.

Apart from medicinal use, these herbs can also be used for purposes like pest control, natural dyes, and formulation of food items, teas and perfumes among others. If we look at various researches from across the world, a sudden spurt in cases of people turning to natural herbs for treatments and usage in everyday life has gone up significantly. Going back to the basics, people have realized the threat chemically treated products pose to their life and are rightly so adopting healthier ways of life by including Ayurveda and its principals as the mainstay of their life.

Importance of Medicinal Plants

Ayurvedic herbs are time tested for their health and other benefits. The nutritive value that they pack are highly recommended for their healing powers. Known to induce no side effects, they have a unique aroma and flavor and when consumed regularly, they act as a perfect mechanism to bring about a balanced harmony between mind and body. They rejuvenate the whole system instead of focusing on one specific organ or body part.

Benefits of Medicinal Plants

- ◆ They have a holistic approach and aid in proper absorption and digestion.
- ◆ They are not disease specific but act as a preventive medicine that positively effects the overall health and well-being by boosting the immune system.
- ◆ They are at par with allopathic medicines and are at times known to be effective in treating diseases like cancer and autoimmune diseases.
- ◆ They are self-contained and nutritive in nature, therefore, are non-toxic and harmless.

- ◆ It deals with the overall well-being and aims to bring harmony between mind, body and soul.
- ◆ Several metabolic and chronic conditions can be treated without any side effects using Ayurvedic medicines and treatments.

Benefits of Indoor plants

Indoor plants don't just look good – they can make us feel good, too. Studies have shown that indoor plants;

- ◆ boost your mood, productivity, concentration and creativity
- ◆ reduce your stress, fatigue, sore throats and colds
- ◆ help clean indoor air by absorbing toxins, increasing humidity & producing oxygen
- ◆ add life to a sterile space, give privacy and reduce noise levels
- ◆ are therapeutic to care for (it's true when we say Plants Make People Happy)

Plants and Food

Plant products are essential for human nutrition. Plants produce fruits rich in carbohydrate, vitamins and fiber that are necessary for health maintenance. They become an integral part of our regular diet. Different parts of plants serve as several purposes in our diet. Plant products are source of vegetables, fruits, essential oils, spices, beverages and many more that provides the prime importance of plants to humans.

Plants and Industry

Plant products are also a source of industrial products. Wooden furniture, doors, windows and different household products are from wood of huge trees. Source of papers that we use

daily for writing are from bamboos. Cotton are source of linen, Industry uses essential oils, cosmetics, perfumes, rubbers from plant sources.

Plants and Medicines

Plants are a great source of medicine even for life-threatening diseases. Also, plant medicine is safer due to their lower chances of side effects and also better compatibility to humans. Medicines derived from plants include vincristine, digitalis, colchicine, reserpine, quinine, morphine, taxol and aspirin.

Plants and Bio-fuels

Some plants are also grown for the sake of bio-fuels. Plant products are used as coal and other fuel products. The plants fuel is less toxic as it does not emit harmful gasses and also less expensive. Even the plant waste is used to generate electricity.

Plants and Natural Pesticides

Plants are also the source of insecticides and pesticides. Artificial pesticides are harmful to the environment. They may even enter food causing health issue to human and animals. Using these naturally derived pesticides are safe. They degrade with time and even do not harm the soil. Ex: Pyrethrin (as Mosquito repellant), Neem, bacteria etc.

Plants and Habitat

Plants create habitats for many organisms. A single tree may provide food and shelter to many species of insects, worms, small mammals, birds, and reptiles.

Plants and Gardens

Thousands of plant species are cultivated for aesthetic purposes as well as to provide shade, modify temperatures, reduce

wind, abate noise, provide privacy, and prevent soil erosion. Plants are the basis of a multibillion-dollar per year tourism industry, which includes travel to historic gardens, national parks, rainforests, forests with colorful autumn leaves, and festivals such as Japan's and America's cherry blossom festivals. While some gardens are planted with food crops, many are planted for aesthetic, ornamental, or conservation purposes.

Arboretums and botanical gardens are public collections of living plants. In private outdoor gardens, lawn grasses, shade trees, ornamental trees, shrubs, vines, herbaceous perennials and bedding plants are used. Gardeners may cultivate the plants in a naturalistic state, or may sculpture their growth, as with topiary or espalier. Gardening is the most popular leisure activities and working with plants or horticulture therapy is beneficial for rehabilitating people with disabilities. Plants may also be grown or kept indoors as houseplants, or in specialized buildings such as greenhouses that are designed for the care and cultivation of living plants. Venus Flytrap, sensitive plant and resurrection plant are examples of plants sold as novelties.

Plants for Art

There are also art forms specializing in the arrangement of cut or living plants, such as bonsai, ikebana, and the arrangement of cut or dried flowers. Ornamental plants have sometimes changed the course of history, as in tulipomania.

Conclusion

Although we now live in a highly industrialised society, we have not lost this dependence on plants. We need to be aware of the part that plants play in our lives and must ensure that we care for these plants to continue this long relationship. It is vital that we remind ourselves of our reliance on green plants. We need to

realise that we must protect the future of the plant species upon which life depends. Without trees our earth will become a desert. Many people fall trees for earn money. Not only their life destroyed, but also everyone life will be destroyed. We all should protest against destroying of plants and trees. We must also join to planting a plant to grow into a big tree. As well as we can join to tree planting campaigns. So we must love trees and we bound to protect it.

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