

## **Medicinal Plants of the Guianas (Guyana, Surinam, French Guiana)**

### GLOSSARY

- ABORTIFACIENT. A drug or material that causes the expulsion of the fetus.
- ABORTION. Expulsion of the fetus from the womb before it is viable.
- ABRASION. A scraped or worn area.
- ABSCCESS. Localized collection of pus or liquid derived from blood in any part of the body.
- ADULTERANT. An impure ingredient introduced into a preparation.
- AFTERBIRTH. The placenta and fetal membranes expelled from the uterus after childbirth.
- AGUE. A sharp, intermittent attack of malaria or other fever and chill.
- ALBUMIN. Any of several water-soluble proteins that are coagulated by heat and are found in egg white, blood serum, milk, various animal tissues, and many plant juices and tissues.
- ALBUMINURIA. Presence of albumin in the urine, sometimes indicating kidney disease.
- ALEXITERIC. An antidote that protects or defends the body from infectious diseases.
- ALLERGY. Hypersensitive or pathological reaction to environmental factors or substances in amounts that usually do not affect most people.
- AMENORRHEA (AMENORRHOEA). Abnormal suppression or absence of menstruation.
- AMOEBIA (AMEBA). Any of various protozoans of, or related to, the genus *Amoeba* occurring in water, soil, or as internal parasites.
- AMOEBICIDAL (AMEBICIDAL). Lethal to the amoeba.
- ANALGESIA. A term that describes the relief of pain, and applies to the diminution or loss of the sense of pain.
- ANALGESIC. A drug producing analgesia, that relieves or reduces pain.
- ANAPHORETIC. An antiperspirant.
- ANESTHETIC (ANAESTHETIC). A drug used to produce anesthesia, a partial or total loss of the sense of pain.
- ANGINA PECTORIS. A disease of the heart signaled by acute constricting pains in the chest.

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ANODYNE. A drug that relieves pain.

ANOREXIA. Loss of appetite or desire for food.

ANOREXIC. Having no appetite; a substance that reduces the appetite.

ANTALGIC. A drug or substance used to treat a painful condition.

ANTHELMINTIC (VERMIFUGE). A drug which causes the destruction and expulsion of intestinal worms.

ANTHRACOID. Resembling anthrax.

ANTHRAX. A bacterial disease of cattle and sheep, sometimes transmitted to man through unprocessed wool.

ANTIAMOEBIC. Having a destructive or suppressive effect on amoebae; an agent used to suppress or destroy parasitic amoebae.

ANTIARRHYTHMIC. Substance or drug used to counter irregularity in the force or rhythm of the heartbeat.

ANTIBIOTIC. A substance derived from a mold or bacteria that inhibits the growth of other microorganisms.

ANTIBLENNORRHAGIC. A substance or drug used to counter blennorrhagia (blennorrhoea), a conjunctival inflammation resulting in mucus discharge.

ANTICOAGULANT. Interfering with or preventing normal blood clotting.

ANTIDIABETIC. A drug that checks diabetes.

ANTIDIARRHOETIC. A drug or substance that acts against diarrhoea.

ANTIDIURETIC. An agent or mechanism that decreases urinary volume.

ANTIDOTE. A remedy for counteracting a poison.

ANTIDYSENTERIC. An agent effective against dysentery.

ANTIEDEMIC. A drug or substance used to treat edema.

ANTIEMETIC. An agent used to suppress vomiting.

ANTIFERTILITY. A drug that inhibits formation of ova or sperm, or interferes with the

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process of fertilization.

ANTIFUNGAL. Killing or inhibiting the growth of the fungi, as an antibiotic.

ANTIHEMORRHAGIC (ANTIHAEMORRHAGIC). A drug or substance that stops hemorrhage, or bleeding.

ANTIHYPERCHOLESTEROLEMIC. An agent used to counter a greater than normal cholesterol concentration in the blood or blood serum.

ANTIHYPERSENSITIVE. A drug or substance used to treat a state of reactivity where a subsequent exposure to an antigen produces a greater effect than that produced on the initial exposure. Also, one used to treat excessive reactivity to any stimulus.

ANTI-IMPLANTATION. A substance or treatment used to prevent the attachment of the fertilized ovum to, or penetration into, the uterus.

ANTI-INFLAMMATORY. Suppressing or reducing inflammation.

ANTIMALARIAL. Pertaining to a drug or substance used to treat malaria.

ANTIMICROBIAL. Acting to kill or inhibit growth and multiplication of microbes, or an agent that achieves this.

ANTIMYCOTIC. Antifungal.

ANTINEOPLASTIC. Acting against a neoplasm.

ANTINEURALGIC. A drug that arrests the intense intermittent pain, usually of head or face, caused by neuralgia.

ANTIOVULATORY. Inhibiting the occurrence of ovulation.

ANTIPALUDIC. Antimalarial.

ANTIPERIODIC. Preventing the recurrence of a disease, such as malaria, or of a symptom.

ANTIPERSPIRANT. An agent that has an inhibitory action on sweating (also antisudorific, anaphoretic).

ANTIPROSTATIC. A drug or substance used to treat the prostate.

ANTIPYRETIC. A drug that reduces or prevents fever.

ANTIRHEUMATIC. An agent that relieves or prevents rheumatism.

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ANTISCORBUTIC. A drug or substance that corrects or cures scurvy.

ANTISEPTIC. A substance which inhibits the growth of microorganisms.

ANTISPASMODIC. Spasmolytic ; a drug or agent that prevents or relieves spasm, or involuntary and irregular contractions of the body muscles.

ANTISUDORIFIC. See Antiperspirant.

ANTISYPHILITIC. A drug which is effective against, or a remedy for, syphilis (a venereal disease caused by *Treponema pallidum*).

ANTITUMORAL. A agent that has activity against the growth, development, or spread of a tumor.

ANTITUSSIVE. A drug that reduces or prevents cough.

ANTIVIRAL. A drug or substance that weakens or abolishes the action of a virus.

ANTIVOMITIVE. A substance taken to reduce or prevent vomiting.

ANURIA. The absence of urine formation.

APERIENT. A mild laxative.

APERITIVE. An appetite stimulant.

APHRODISIAC – an agent or substance that causes stimulation of sexual passions.

APOPLEXY. A disease in which the brain's function suddenly stops, with abolition of voluntary motion and sense.

AROMATIC. Having a pleasant odor; fragrant.

ARTHRITIS. Inflammation of the joints.

ASCARIS. A genus of intestinal parasitic roundworms.

ASPHYXIA. Failure or prevention of the respiratory process due either to obstruction of air flow to the lungs or to lack of oxygen in the inspired air.

ASPHYXIATION. The process of undergoing asphyxia.

ASPIRIN. A white crystalline powder (acetylsalicylic acid) commonly used as an analgesic and antipyretic.

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**ASTHENIA.** A nonspecific symptom characterized by loss of energy and strength and a feeling of weakness. It usually accompanies chronic debilitating conditions such as infectious diseases and cancer.

**ASTHMA.** A disorder characterized by wheezing, difficult breathing, coughing and a suffocating feeling.

**ASTRINGENT.** A drug that contracts the body tissue to check discharge of secretions, or arrests capillary bleeding.

**ATHLETE'S FOOT.** A contagious skin infection caused by parasitic fungi, usually affecting the feet and sometimes the hands, and causing itching, blisters, cracking and scaling. Also called "dermatophytosis".

**ATONY.** Insufficient muscular tone.

**AURICULAR.** Of or relating to the auricle or the ear in general.

**BACTERICIDAL.** Capable of causing a rapid decrease in viability of bacteria through physical or chemical action.

**BALM.** An aromatic, oily resin exuded from various, chiefly tropical, trees and shrubs, and used in medicine.

**BALSAMIC RESIN.** Consisting of or resembling balsam, an oily or gummy oleoresin, usually containing benzoic or cinnamic acids, obtained from the exudations of various trees and shrubs, and used as a base for cough syrups, other medicines and perfumes.

**BECHIC.** A tonic or other remedy that controls coughing.

**BED-WETTING.** Involuntary passing of urine, chiefly at night and by children.

**BERI-BERI.** A peculiar form of acute dropsy and edema of the lower extremities.

**BILE.** A fluid secreted by the liver and discharged into the duodenum where it is integral in the digestion and absorption of fats.

**BILHARZIA (BILHARZIASIS).** See Schistosoma.

**BILIARY.** Relating to the bile or to the structures in which the bile is contained or transported.

**BILIOUSNESS.** Popular term used to describe conditions marked by general malaise, giddiness, vomiting, headache, indigestion, or constipation.

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BITTER. A medicinal agent having a bitter taste and used as a tonic, alterative, or appetizer.

BLENNORRHAGIA. Gonorrhoea.

BLEPHARITIS. Inflammation of the eyelids.

BLISTER. Thin vesicle on the skin, filled with serum, and caused by rubbing, friction, or burn.

BOIL. Localized pyrogenic infection originating in a hair follicle, often painful.

BOTFLY. The fly *Dermatobia hominis*, the larvae of which penetrates the human skin.

BRIGHT 'S DISEASE. Chronic nephritis.

BRONCHIAL INFLAMMATION. See Bronchitis.

BRONCHITIS. An illness caused by inflammation of a bronchial mucous membrane in the lungs.

BRONCHO-PULMONARY. Relating to the bronchi and lungs.

BUBO. Inflamed, swollen lymph node, particularly in the groin or neck.

BUCCAL. Pertaining to the mouth.

BUCKLEY'S WHITE RUB. Ointment with menthol and oils of peppermint (*Mentha* sp.) and wintergreen (*Gaultheria* sp.).

BUCK SICK. Virulent form of thrush contracted by adults of African descent and Amerindians in Guyana. Also called Carib sick.

BUSH YAWS. See Leishmaniasis.

CALCULUS (CALCULI). An abnormal concretion occurring in the body, usually composed of mineral salts, such as gallstones or kidney stones.

CANCER. A malignant new growth or tumor in any part of the body.

CANKER. See Chancre.

CARCINOMA. A malignant epithelial tumor.

CARCINOSARCOMA. A rare, single tumor containing carcinomatous and sarcomatous

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components.

CARDIAC. Pertaining to the heart.

CARDIAC ASTHMA. Acute attacks of dyspnoea with wheezing, resembling bronchial asthma but resulting from a cardiac disorder.

CARDIALGIA. Heartburn.

CARDIOTONIC. Having a tonic affect on the heart.

CARIB SICK. See Buck sick.

CARIES. Rottenness or ulceration of teeth or bone; dental cavity.

CARMINATIVE. S drug or substance which prevents formation of, or promotes expulsion of, flatus (gas generated in the stomach or bowels).

CATAPLASM. Medicated poultice or soft external application.

CATARACT. Any form of partial or complete opacity or clouding of the lens of the eye.

CATARRH. Mild inflammation of mucous membranes, especially those of the air passages of the nose and throat.

CATHARTIC. Drug having a purgative action on the bowels.

CAUSTIC. Capable of eating away tissue by a corrosive or burning effect.

CAUTERIZE. Use of a caustic agent to medically or surgically treat a lesion or to stop bleeding.

CAVITY. A dental caries (See Caries).

CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM. The part of the vertebrate nervous system consisting of the brain and spinal cord.

CEPHALALGIA. Headache.

CEPHALIC. Pertaining to the head.

CERCARICIDAL ACTIVITY. Lethal or deleterious to cercaria, the swimming larval form of digenetic trematodes.

CHANCRE (CANKER). A spreading, ulcer-like sore, especially in the mouth.

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- CHECKBALL. A problem with the testicles, as applied to men in Guyana.
- CHICKEN POX. A contagious disease usually affecting children, resulting in sporadic eruption of papules, becoming vesicles and then pustules.
- CHIGGER. Larva of a trombiculid mite; the skin-inhabiting parasitic stage of the mite, which feeds on serous elements of host tissue.
- CHIGOE. A flea of the species *Pulex (Tunga) penetrans*, commonly known as a sand flea.
- CHILL. A shivering or shaking, accompanied by a sense of cold.
- CHLOROSIS. Iron deficiency anemia said to be characterized by a greenish-yellow color.
- CHOLAGOGUE. A drug which stimulates the flow of bile by the liver; choleric.
- CHOLESTEROL. A crystalline fatty alcohol found especially in animal fats, blood, nerve tissue and bile.
- CHOLINERGIC. Having physiological effects similar to acetylcholine, a compound that lowers blood pressure and increases peristalsis of the alimentary canal.
- CHYMOPAPAIN. An enzyme used medicinally and to tenderize meat, derived from papaya.
- CICATRISANT (CICATRIZANT). An agent capable of causing scar formation.
- CICATRIZATION. The process of scar evolution associated with wound contraction.
- CICATRIZE. To heal in a way that results in the formation of a scar.
- CLARIFY. To make a liquid become clear and free from impurities.
- CLYSTER. Enema.
- COLD. An acute inflammation of the mucous membranes of the respiratory passages, especially of the nose and throat, caused by a virus and characterized by sneezing and coughing.
- COLIC. Pain resulting from excessive or sudden abdominal spasmodic contractions of muscles in the intestine walls, bile ducts or ureter following stretching of the walls by gas or solid substances.
- CONJUNCTIVITIS. Inflammation of the conjunctiva (mucous membrane lining the



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inner surface of the eyelids), caused by bacteria or a speck of dust entering the eye and resulting in a discharge.

CONSTIPATION. Condition of bowels in which defecation is irregular and difficult.

CONSUMPTION. General term used to describe the wasting of tissues, including but not limited to tuberculosis.

CONTRACEPTIVE. A drug or device used to stop conception.

CONTUSION. A bruise, or superficial injury in which the skin is not broken.

CONVULSANT. Any drug, substance or physical disturbance which can induce convulsions.

CONVULSION. Violent irregular motion of limb or body due to involuntary contraction of muscles.

COOLANT (COOLING). That which reduces the body temperature.

CORDIAL. A preparation which is stimulating to the heart.

CORYZA. Inflammation of the mucous membrane of the nose and sinuses.

COUNTER-IRRITANT. An agent which induces an inflammation of the skin for the relief of a more serious inflammation.

CRAMP. A sudden, painful involuntary contraction of a muscle or muscles.

CURARE. A black resinous substance prepared from the bark of certain South American plants (mostly Loganiaceae and Menispermaceae) and used by some Amerindians for poisoning arrows. It causes motor paralysis when introduced into the blood stream and is now used in medicine, such as for heart surgery, to reduce muscular spasms under certain conditions.

CURETTAGE. Surgical procedure in which a body cavity or tissue is scraped with a sharp instrument or aspirated with a cannula.

CUTANEOUS. Relating to the skin.

DANDRUFF. Scurf; dead skin in small scales among the hair.

DARTRE. A temporary condition of scurf or scaly, dry skin.

DEBILITY. Weakness; relaxation of solid or muscular fiber.

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DECOCTION. Liquid preparation obtained by boiling medicinal plant substance in water and extracting drugs by straining the preparation.

DEMULCENT. A substance used for its soothing and protective action which allays irritation of surfaces, especially mucous membranes.

DEPILATORY. A hair remover; an agent for removing or destroying hair.

DEPRESSANT. An agent which causes a reduction in activity, as of the central nervous system or myocardial activity.

DEPURATIVE. A drug or agent that induces the excretion and removal of waste material.

DENTAL. Relating to a tooth or teeth.

DERMATITIS. Inflammation of the skin, causing discomforts such as eczema.

DERMATOSIS. Any disease of the skin.

DIABETES. A metabolic disorder characterized by excessive elimination of urine and persistent thirst, and involving inadequate secretion or utilization of insulin.

DIAPHORETIC. A drug causing an increase of perspiration as a result of the stimulation of the sweat glands.

DIARRHOEA (DIARRHEA). A common symptom of gastrointestinal disease resulting in the increased frequency of stool discharge.

DIGESTION. The process by which ingested food is broken down into smaller and simpler molecules suitable for absorption from the intestine.

DIGESTIVE. An agent that promotes digestion.

DIGITALIS. The dried leaf of *Digitalis purpurea*, the purple foxglove. It contains glycosides which have the effects upon the heart of strengthening the force of contraction and preventing irregularities in the ventricular rhythm. It also has been used in the treatment of congestive heart failure and accompanying edema.

DILATION AND CURETTAGE. Surgical dilation of the cervix and curettage of the uterus for the diagnosis of and treatment of pathologic conditions of the uterus and to terminate pregnancy.

DIPSOMANIA. The pathological use of alcohol.

DISCUTIENT. An agent causing the disappearance or dispersal of a pathological

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condition, such as the absorption of a tumor.

**DISINFECTANT.** A drug or substance that cleanses infection, and destroys harmful germs, bacteria, or viruses.

**DIURETIC.** A drug that has the ability to stimulate the kidneys to increase the secretion and flow of urine.

**DIZZINESS.** A condition of feeling giddy or unsteady.

**DOUCHE.** A localized spray of liquid, gas, or vapor directed into a body cavity or onto a part.

**DROPSY.** A leakage of the watery part of the blood into any of the tissues or cavities of the body.

**DYSENTERY.** A disease caused by bacteria or protozoa, bringing inflammation of the mucous membrane and glands of the large intestine, accompanied by painful diarrhoea. The stool is often accompanied by blood and mucus.

**DYSPEPSIA.** Indigestion.

**DYSPNOEA.** Difficult breathing.

**DYSURIA.** Difficult or painful urination.

**ECZEMA.** Acute or chronic non-contagious inflammation of the skin, often accompanied by itches.

**EDEMA (OEDEMA).** A condition in which excessive clear fluid passes from the blood into the tissues.

**ELEPHANTIASIS.** A condition characterized by chronically thickened and edematous tissue, especially that of the genitals and legs, due to various causes. Filarial elephantiasis is also called “mal de Cayenne”.

**EMETIC.** A drug or agent having the power to empty the stomach by causing vomiting.

**EMOLLIENT.** A substance applied externally to soften the skin, or internally to soothe an inflamed or irritated surface.

**EMULSIFY.** To form into an emulsion.

**EMULSION.** A fluid formed by the suspension of very finely divided oily or resinous liquid in another liquid.

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ENEMA. A liquid injected into the rectum either as a purgative or a medicine; clyster.

EPIDERMAL. Pertaining to the epidermis.

EPIDERMIS. Outermost layer of the skin, having no blood vessels and consisting of several tiers of cells, covering the dermis.

ERUPTION. A visible rash or other cutaneous disruption.

EPILEPSY. A nervous disorder involving temporary loss of consciousness with or without convulsions and muscular spasms.

ERYSIPELAS. An acute inflammation of the skin and subcutaneous tissues, characterized by symptoms of high fever and prostration (St. Anthony's fire).

ESOPHAGEAL. Of the esophagus, through which food passes from the pharynx to the stomach.

ESTROGENIC. Of estrogen; or producing estrus.

ESTRUS. The sexual excitement, or heat, of female mammals; or the period of this, characterized also by changes in the sex organs.

EXCITANT. An agent that produces excitation of the vital functions or those of the brain.

EXPECTORANT. A drug that promotes or modifies the ejection of mucous or other secretions by coughing from the upper respiratory tract, especially the mouth.

EYEWASH. Medicated liquid used to bathe the eye.

FEBRIFUGE. A drug that reduces or prevents fever; antifebrile, antipyretic.

FILARIASIS. Infection with filarial nematode worms, common in many tropical and subtropical regions.

FLATULENCE. The presence of excessive gas in the stomach and intestines.

FLUTTERING HEART. See Palpitation.

FLUX. An excessive discharge of fluid.

FOMENTATION. A substance administered by warm, moist applications.

FORTIFIER. A substance used to enrich or strengthen another substance.

FRAMBOESIA. Yaws.

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FUMIGANT. A gas or aerosol used for disinfecting rooms or materials.

FURUNCLE. A deep staphylococcal folliculitis, commonly known as a boil.

FURUNCULOSIS. A condition marked by the presence of furuncles.

GALL BLADDER. Organ that stores bile which aids in the digestion of fats.

GASTRITIS. Inflammation of the stomach.

GASTROENTERITIS. A syndrome characterized by gastrointestinal symptoms, including nausea and vomiting, diarrhea, and abdominal discomfort, and usually viral, bacterial or parasitic in origin.

GASTRO-INTESTINAL. Pertaining to the stomach and intestines.

GINGIVITIS. Inflammation of the gums.

GLANS PENIS. The conical expansion of the *corpus spongiosum* at the distal extremity of the penis.

GONORRHOEA (GONORRHEA). A venereal disease that causes specific infectious inflammation of the mucous membranes of the urethra and adjacent cavities, due to the gonococcus.

GRIPPE. An epidemic catarrh; an older term for influenza.

GROUND ITCH. Fungal infection between the toes.

HALLUCINOGEN (HALLUCINOGENIC). A drug or substance that produces hallucinations, imaginary things apparently seen or heard.

HEADACHE. Pain in the head.

HEARTBURN. A burning sensation in the stomach and esophagus caused by excess acidity of stomach fluids.

HEAT RASH. Any condition aggravated by heat such as intertrigo, or associated with hot weather.

HEMATOMA. A localized accumulation of blood in a tissue or space, usually composed of clotted blood and most commonly caused by trauma or erosion of a blood vessel by pathological processes.

HEMORRHAGE (HAEMORRHAGE). Bleeding.

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HEMORRHOID (HAEMORRHOID). A mass of enlarged, often dilated and twisted blood vessels or veins of the canal or lower portion of the alimentary tract, frequently everted at the anal margin; synonymous with piles.

HEMOSTATIC (HAEMOSTATIC). A drug or substance that arrests hemorrhage.

HEPATIC. Pertaining to or occurring in the liver.

HERNIA. The abnormal protrusion of an organ through its containing wall.

HERPES. An acute inflammation of the skin or mucous membrane, characterized by the development of groups of vesicles on an inflammatory base.

HERPES SIMPLEX. A disease caused by infection with *Herpesvirus hominis*, usually characterized by small vesicles developing around the lips or nostrils, or in the genital area. Infection may also involve the eye, brain or meninges.

HODGKIN'S DISEASE. A disease characterized by a progressive enlargement of lymph glands, spleen and anemia.

HYDROPSY. Dropsy.

HYPERPLASIA. A non-tumorous increase in the number of cells in an organ or tissue with consequent enlargement of the affected part.

HYPERTENSION. High blood pressure.

HYPERTROPHY. Enlargement or overgrowth of an organ.

HYPOGLYCEMIA. An abnormally low level of sugar in the blood.

HYPOTENSIVE. Abnormally low blood pressure.

HYPOTHERMIC. Pertaining to hypothermia, or a body temperature below normal.

ICHTHYOTOXIC. A substance which is poisonous to fish.

IMMUNOSTIMULATORY. Stimulating or activating the immune system, and thus antibody activity.

IMPETIGO. A contagious eruption of the skin, either crusted, bullous or pustular, and caused by streptococci and/or staphylococci.

IMPOTENCE. Inability to engage in sexual intercourse.

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**INFLAMMATION.** A diseased condition of some part of the body, resulting from injury, infection, or irritation and characterized by redness, pain, heat and swelling.

**INFLUENZA.** Acute infectious febrile disorder, caused by a virus.

**INFUSION.** The liquid extract that results from steeping a drug or substance in water, and which contains its active principles.

**INGUINAL HERNIA.** A hernia into the inguinal canal of the groin.

**INHALANT.** An agent or medicinal substance that is administered as a vapor into the upper respiratory passages.

**INSECTICIDE.** A substance that destroys insects.

**INSOMNIA.** Sleeplessness.

**INTERMITTENT.** Occurring at intervals rather than continuously.

**INTERNAL.** Situated or occurring on the inside; interior.

**INTOXICANT.** A substance that produces intoxication or drunkenness.

**IRRITANT.** An agent which produces skin irritation.

**ITCH.** To feel an irritating sensation on the skin, with the desire to scratch.

**JAUNDICE.** Yellowness of the skin, tissues and secretions, due to the deposition of bile pigments in the blood.

**KIDNEY.** Either of a pair of organs in the dorsal area of the abdominal cavity which function to excrete waste products and to maintain fluid, electrolyte, and acid-base homeostasis.

**LABOR.** The process of childbirth, especially the muscular contractions involved.

**LACTATION.** The formation and secretion of milk.

**LARYNGITIS.** Inflammation of the membrane lining the larynx.

**LATEX.** A milky liquid produced in certain plants.

**LAXATIVE.** A drug having the action of loosening the bowels, stimulating defecation.

**LEISHMANIASIS.** Any of a group of infectious diseases caused by flagellate protozoan parasites of the genus *Leishmania* and transmitted to man by sandflies of the

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genera *Phlebotomus* and *Lutzomyia*.

LEPROSY (HANSEN'S DISEASE). Chronic contagious disease caused by infection with *Leprabacillus*, characterized by the formation of nodules on the body surface and, in an advanced stage, often producing deformities.

LEUCORRHOEA. A white or yellowish mucopurulent discharge from the vagina.

LEUKEMIA. A disease of the blood, characterized by a great increase in the number of white blood corpuscles.

LIBIDO. The sexual urge or instinct.

LINIMENT. An agent or substance applied to the skin by gentle friction or brisk rubbing. It is intended to relieve superficial pain.

LUMBAGO. Muscular rheumatism; a general term for backache in the lumbar region.

MACERATION. Softening or separating parts by soaking in a liquid.

MALAISE. A feeling of untoward weakness, lethargy, or discomfort, as of impending illness.

MALARIA. An acute, usually chronic, disease caused by protozoa of the genus *Plasmodium* and transmitted by the *Anopheles* mosquito; characterized by intermittent fever, anemia and debility, and, in its acute form, by chills, high fever and profuse sweating at regular intervals.

MARSH FEVER. See Malaria. Disease originally attributed to noxious atmospheric emanations from marshy ground.

MASTICATORY (SIALAGOGUE). A drug or substance chewed to increase salivation.

MEASLES. An acute infectious viral disease, characterized by skin eruptions, high fever and nasal catarrh, and occurring most frequently in childhood.

MENOPAUSAL. Referring to the permanent cessation of menstruation.

MENSTRUAL. Of the menses.

MENSES. The monthly uterine bleeding of women.

MENSTRUAL PAINS. Cramps associated with menses.

METRORRHAGIA. Uterine bleeding which occurs at a time outside of the usual menstrual period.



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MICROFILARIA. A pre-larval parasitic worm of the family Onchocercidae, found in the vector and in the blood or tissue fluids of the human host.

MICTURITION. The act of passing urine.

MIGRAINE. A recurring intensely painful headache, often accompanied by vomiting, giddiness and disturbance of vision.

MISCARRIAGE. Spontaneous abortion.

MITE. Tiny arachnid (Acari), many of which live as parasites in animals or in prepared foods.

MORPHINE. The principal alkaloid of opium, and a potent narcotic analgesic.

MUCILAGE. A medicine used to soothe mucous membranes.

MUCOUS. Of or relating to mucus or to the production of mucin.

MUCUS. A viscid secretion of mucous membranes.

MYCOSIS. An infection or disease caused by a fungus.

NARCOTIC. Drug or substance used to relieve pain and which induces drowsiness, sleep, stupor or insensibility.

NAUSEA. A feeling of sickness at the stomach, with an urge to vomit.

NECROSIS. The morphologic changes that follow cell death, characterized most frequently by nuclear and also cytoplasmic changes.

NEOPLASM. An abnormal new growth of tissue; tumor.

NEPHRITIS. Acute inflammation of the kidneys.

NERVOUS CONDITION. A feeling of acute and agitated sensitivity.

NERVOUS DISEASE. Disease relating to the nerves or nervous system.

NEURALGIA. Sudden severe pains radiating along the course of a nerve, without demonstrable structural changes occurring.

ODONTALGIA. Toothache.

OERALI POISON. Arrow poison; see Curare.

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OINTMENT. A semi-solid preparation of one or more medicinal substances in a suitable base.

OPHTHALMIA. Severe inflammation of the conjunctiva of the eye or the eyeball.

ORAL. Pertaining to the mouth.

OTITIS. Inflammation of the ear.

PALPITATION. A rapid pulsation or throbbing of the heart.

PAPAIN. A protein-degrading enzyme, used medicinally and to tenderize meat.

PARTURITION. The act of childbirth.

PECTORAL SYRUP. A syrup used to treat chest coughs.

PHLEGM. An abnormally large amount of mucus discharged through the mouth.

PHOTOSENSITIVITY. Sensitivity to light.

PILES. See Hemorrhoid.

PILOCARPINE. An alkaloid derived from the leaves of *Pilocarpus jaborandi* or *Pilocarpus microphyllus* and having cholinergic activity.

PISCICIDE. Fish poison.

PITYRIASIS CAPITIS. Fine superficial scaling of the hairy scalp.

PLASTER. Poultice.

PLEURISY. Inflammation of the pleura membranes enveloping the lung.

PNEUMONIA. A large number of conditions that include the inflammation or passive congestion of the lungs, resulting in portions of the lung becoming solid.

POULTICE. A paste of a plant part or drug applied to a sore or inflamed part of the body, to supply moisture or act as a local stimulant; cataplasm.

PROLAPSE. The slipping out of place of an organ or part of it.

PROSTATE. A gland that surrounds the urethra at the bladder in the male.

PRURITUS. Severe itching.

## **Medicinal Plants of the Guianas (Guyana, Surinam, French Guiana)**

PSORIASIS. A chronic inflammatory skin disease characterized by reddish patches covered with white scales.

PSYCHOACTIVE. Exerting effects on the mind or on behavior, as certain drugs.

PSYCHOTOMIMETIC. Hallucinogen; hallucinogenic.

PSYCHOTROPIC. Denoting any substance that affects psychic function or behavior.

PUERPERAL. Pertaining to childbirth.

PULMONARY. Pertaining to the lungs.

PURGATIVE. A drug which, when taken internally, produces an evacuation of the bowels.

PUSTULE. A small elevation filled with pus and situated within or beneath the epidermis or within a pilosebaceous follicle; pimple.

PYRETIC. Referring to fever.

QUININE. The primary alkaloid of *Cinchona*, used in treating malaria.

RASH (RASHES). Eruption of the skin in spots or patches.

RAY. See Stingray.

REFRESHER. A beverage consumed in order to refresh a person.

RENAL. Pertaining to the kidney.

RENAL CALCULI. Kidney stones.

REPELLENT. An agent that serves to repel pestiferous organisms.

RESOLUTION. The stage in a pathologic process marked by the subsidence of inflammation.

RESOLUTIVE. An agent that induces subsidence of inflammation.

RESOLVENT. Medicine that reduces swelling or inflammation.

RESORB. To absorb or assimilate a product of the body, such as an exudate or a cellular growth.

## **Medicinal Plants of the Guianas (Guyana, Surinam, French Guiana)**

RESTORATIVE (RESTORER). A remedy efficient in restoring health and strength.

REVULSIVE. Counterirritant, used for swellings.

RHEUMATIC. Pertaining to abnormalities of the musculoskeletal system, or to rheumatism.

RHEUMATISM. General term indicating diseases of muscle, tendon, joint, bone or nerve, and resulting in discomfort and disability.

RHEUMATOID. Pertaining to rheumatic disease, especially rheumatoid arthritis.

RINGWORM. Common contagious disease produced by fungi that affects skin, hair or nails.

SCABIES. Contagious parasitic disease of the skin caused by the mite *Sarcoptes scabi*.

SCIATICA. A neuralgia radiating from the hip and thigh, through the leg and into the foot, involving the sciatic nerve.

SCROFULA. Tuberculosis of the lymphatic glands, especially of the neck, in which the glands become enlarged.

SCURF. See Pityriasis capitis.

SEDATIVE. A drug which quiets nervous activity.

SHAMAN. A priest of the religious practice of certain native peoples who believe that good and evil spirits pervade the world, and can be summoned or heard through inspired priests acting as mediums.

SHAMPOO. Any of various liquid or cream preparations of soap or detergent used to wash the hair and scalp (some are medicated).

SINUSITIS Inflammation of a sinus or sinuses.

SMALLPOX. A severe, eruptive contagious disease marked by chills, high fever, headache and backache.

SNUFF. Powder inhaled through the nose; sometimes a narcotic snuff.

SOFT GREASE. Coconut oil; a compound containing paraffin ointment of astringent nature.

SOPORIFIC. A sleep-inducing drug.

## **Medicinal Plants of the Guianas (Guyana, Surinam, French Guiana)**

SPASMOLYTIC. A drug or agent that prevents or relieves spasms or the involuntary and irregular contractions of body muscles.

SPLEEN. The organ that filters blood and prevents infection.

SPRAIN. To wrench or twist a ligament or muscle of a joint, especially the ankle or wrist, without dislocating the bones.

STANCH. To stop or check the flow of a bodily fluid, especially blood, as from a wound.

STIMULANT. A drug or agent that causes an increase of functional activity.

STERILITY. Inability to produce offspring; the state of being free from living microorganisms; asepsis.

STINGRAY (RAY). Any of various rays of the family Dasyatidae, having a whiplike tail armed with a venomous spine capable of inflicting severe injury.

STOMACHIC. A stimulant of appetite; a drug or substance which promotes the functional activity of the stomach.

STOOL. The matter discharged from the bowel; feces.

STRICTURE. An abnormal narrowing of the internal passageway within a tubular structure, such as a vessel or duct.

STYPTIC. A drug or agent that checks bleeding by causing contraction of the blood vessels.

SUBCUTANEOUS. Beneath the skin.

SUDORIFIC. A drug or agent causing sweating.

SUPPURATION. Formation or secretion of pus.

SWAMP FEVER. Malaria.

SYPHILIS. A venereal disease characterized by a variety of lesions and caused by *Treponema pallidum*.

TACHYCARDIA. A fast heart rate; applied in adults to rates exceeding 100 beats per minute.

TAENIA. A tapeworm or flatworm of the genus *Taenia*.

TAENIACIDE (TENIACIDE). An agent that destroys tapeworms.

## **Medicinal Plants of the Guianas (Guyana, Surinam, French Guiana)**

- TAMPON. A pack or plug made of absorbent material that can be placed in a cavity to absorb blood or other fluid, or to control bleeding.
- TETANUS. A severe infectious disease caused by *Clostridium tetani*, characterized by rigidity and spasms of the voluntary muscles.
- TETE. Acute dermatitis, caused by a mixed bacterial and fungal infection.
- TETTER. Any of a number of skin diseases. An often ambiguous term.
- THRUSH. A mycotic disease of the upper digestive tract resulting from infection by the fungus *Candida albicans*. It occurs especially in children and is characterized by small, whitish spots on the tip and sides of the tongue.
- TINCTURE. Solution of a drug in alcohol.
- TISANE. A herbal infusion used as a beverage for medicinal purposes; a “tea”.
- TONIC. A drug that invigorates or generally improves the normal tone of an organ of the patient.
- TOXIC. Poisonous.
- TRACHOMA. A contagious disease of the conjunctiva and cornea of the eye, producing painful sensitivity to strong light, and excessive weeping.
- TRANQUILIZER. A drug used in calming persons suffering from nervous tension or anxiety.
- TREMATODE. A member of the Class Trematoda, which includes the parasitic flukes of man and domestic animals.
- TUBERCULOSIS. Infectious disease caused by the tubercle bacillus, attacking all tissues of the body but especially the lungs.
- TUMOR. An abnormal swelling of the body other than those due to direct injury.
- TYMPANITIS. Otitis media (inflammation of the middle ear).
- TYPHOID. Infectious disease caused by bacteria in contaminated food and resulting in fever and intestinal disorders.
- ULCER. An interruption of the continuity of a surface, with an inflamed base; any open sore other than a wound.

## **Medicinal Plants of the Guianas (Guyana, Surinam, French Guiana)**

UMBILICUS. The scar on the abdomen marking the site of former attachment of the umbilical cord in placental mammals.

UNGUENT. Ointment.

URETHRA. A slit-like tube conveying urine from the internal orifice of the urinary bladder to the external urethral orifice.

URETHRITIS. Inflammation of the urethra.

URINARY. Relating to the passage of urine.

URINOGENITAL. Relating to the genital and urinary organs or functions.

URTICANT. A substance that causes wheals to form.

URTICARIA. A transient skin eruption characterized by the appearance of intensely itching wheals or welts; hives or nettle rash.

UTERINE. Pertaining to the uterus.

UTERUS. Womb.

VARICOSE. Abnormally dilated or knotted blood vessels.

VASOCONSTRICTOR. A drug causing constriction of the blood vessels.

VASODILATOR. A drug causing dilation or relaxation of the blood vessels.

VASODILATORY. Serving to widen the lumen of the blood vessels.

VENEREAL. Pertaining to or produced by sexual intercourse.

VERMIFUGE. A drug which causes the destruction and expulsion of intestinal worms; anthelmintic.

VESICANT (VESICATORY). Any drug or agent that produces blisters on the skin.

VITILIGO. A disorder of pigmentation in which the melanocytes inhibit melanogenesis and eventually disappear, resulting in a patchy loss of pigmentation.

VOMIT. To eject the stomach contents through the mouth in a sudden forceful fashion, usually associated with nausea.

VOMITIVE. An agent that causes vomiting.

## **Medicinal Plants of the Guianas (Guyana, Surinam, French Guiana)**

VULNERARY. A drug or agent that heals wounds.

WART. A common contagious skin tumor caused by a virus infection.

WHITE PAREIRA BRAVA. An infusion used to treat obstructions of the liver and to rid the kidneys and bladder of mucus, grit and sand.

WHITLOW. An old general term for any suppurative inflammation on a finger or toe.

WHOOPING COUGH. Acute infectious disease, usually affecting children, caused by a bacillus, and characterized by catarrh of the respiratory tract and repeated attacks of coughing that end in forced inspiration.

YAWS. Infectious tropical disease caused by *Treponema pertenue* and characterized by an initial lesion, followed by further multiple lesions of the skin; framboesia.