

LEMONGRASS

IT'S USES, MEDICINAL AND INDUSTRIAL PROPERTIES

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INTRODUCTION:

Lemongrass (*Cymbopogon* spp.) is also called as fever grass. It is a tall, perennial sedge throwing up dense fascicles of leaves from a short rhizome. The culm is short, erect, upto 1.8 meter high. Leaves are long, green, linear tapering upwards and along the margin. Shoots are widened and tightly clasping at the base. It is a short day plant and produce profuse flowering in South India. The inflorescence is a long spike about one meter in length. In India, it is cultivated along Western Ghats (Maharashtra, Kerala), Karnataka and Tamil Nadu states besides foot-hills of Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim. It contains essential oils such as myrcene, limonene, citral, geraniol, citronellol, geranyl acetate, nerol, and nerolidol. Additionally, lemongrass oil is a natural food preservative.

USES:

Lemongrass is a herbal plant. The leaves and the oil are used to make medicine. Lemongrass is used in many ways as follows:

- Lemongrass is used for treating digestive tract spasms, stomachache, high blood pressure, convulsions, pain, vomiting, cough, achy joints (rheumatism), fever, the common cold, exhaustion. It is also used to kill germs and as a mild astringent.
- Some people apply lemongrass and its essential oil directly to the skin for headache, stomachache, abdominal pain, and muscle pain.
- By inhalation, the essential oil of lemongrass is used as aromatherapy for muscle pain.
- It is mostly used as a flavouring agent in teas, soups and dishes.
- In food and beverages, lemongrass is used as a flavouring. For example, lemongrass leaves are commonly used as "lemon" flavouring in herbal teas.
- Lemongrass tea is used for relieving anxiety, lowering cholesterol, preventing infections, relieving bloating, etc.
- In manufacturing, lemongrass is used as a fragrance in soaps and cosmetics.
- Lemongrass is also used in making vitamin A and natural Citral.



MEDICINAL PROPERTIES:

As lemongrass is a useful medicinal plant. It contains many essential elements which help to maintain better health in human beings. Lemongrass contains antioxidants, flavonoids and phenolic compounds such as luteolin, glycosides, quercetin, kaempferol, elemicin, catechol, chlorogenic acid, and caffeic acid, all of which help in providing an impressive range of medicinal aids.

Lemongrass is a source of essential vitamins such as vitamin A, vitamin B1 (thiamine), vitamin B2 (riboflavin), vitamin B3 (niacin), vitamin B5 (pantothenic acid), vitamin B6 (pyridoxine), folate, and vitamin C. It also provides essential minerals such as potassium, calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, manganese, copper, zinc, and iron, which are required for the healthy functioning of the human body. Some medicinal properties of lemongrass are as follows:

1. **Lowers cholesterol:** Lemongrass possesses anti-hyperlipidemic and anti-hypercholesterolemic properties that support healthy cholesterol levels. It prevents various cardiac disorders such as atherosclerosis.
2. **Detoxifies the body:** Lemongrass helps in cleaning and flushing harmful toxic wastes out of the body, as a result of its diuretic properties. The diuretic effect of the herb helps in increasing the quantity and frequency of urination, which helps in maintaining digestive health and assisting in maintaining a clean system.
3. **Anticancer potential:** Lemongrass is effective in preventing the growth of cancer cells without affecting the healthy cells of the body. This is due to the presence of citral in it, which inhibits the growth of hepatic cancer cells during the initial phase.
4. **Treats insomnia:** Lemongrass aids in calming muscles and nerves, which helps in including deep sleep.

5. **Respiratory disorders:** Lemongrass is widely used in Ayurvedic medicine for its healing effects in treating cough and cold.

Lemongrass has many other medicinal properties as it reduces aches, relieves pain and inflammation, boosts immunity, prevents skin disorders, treats edema, obesity, good for breast feeding, reduces varicosity.

INDUSTRIAL PROPERTIES:

- It is a medicinal plant with compounds capable of controlling pathogens and increasing herbal resistance to pathogenic diseases.
- It is widely used in food industries as it is used in the formation of herbal teas and non-alcoholic beverages in baked food.
- It is used in cosmetic industries as the essential oil from lemongrass is commonly used as a fragrance in perfumes and cosmetics.
- It is widely used in the production of beta carotene and vitamin A.
- Due to its chemical constituents, lemongrass is used in various pharmaceutical industries for its anti-depressant, analgesic, antipyretic, bactericidal, antiseptic, carminative and astringent properties.

CONCLUSION:

Aromatic and medicinal plants are still a major part of alternative and traditional medicine in the developing countries. Lemongrass is also a herbal plant which possesses many essential elements that are benefits for human health. Lemongrass essential oil showed higher antibacterial activity than tetracycline. The lemongrass oil is a popular tool in aromatherapy to help relieve stress, anxiety, and depression. Additionally, Lemongrass tea also has many health benefits as it controls cholesterol, improves nervous system, respiratory system of the body. It is also used for the production of many creams, soaps, perfumes, and many types of drugs which are effective against many infections. As lemongrass possesses so many essential properties, its demand will increase in modern times and farmers will cultivate it more and earn high profits from it.

