A Daily Dose Of Veggies

Posted on

Contrary to the Sinhalese proverb, “ugurata hora beheth bonawa vage” – “as taking medicine on the sly to the throat” – intended to point out impossibility on a sarcastic note; would you believe me if I said this fact is a literal possibility?

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We all know that vegetables are good for us, and thanks to my mother I can positively say I’ve heard almost every fantastic tale that parents cook up to get some of those greens inside us; from “it gives you a golden complexion” to “it makes you wise and beautiful.”
All vegetables no doubt carry nutritious value in them, but there are certain common local vegetables that carry medicinal qualities and are even recommended in Ayurveda treatment. What we kicked and screamed in protest of consuming as children and maybe even still occasionally, conceal almost miraculous properties to be experienced, if you take some time to get to know them better.

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Karapincha/Curry Leaf

Curry Leaves are commonplace in Sri Lankan kitchens as an irreplaceable ingredient used in enhancing the taste and aroma of any curry dish. Standalone, it also makes good for a zesty sambol and even porridge.
Internalised, this extraordinary little leaf is very effective against diabetes, heart disease, high cholesterol, for throat, phlegm, respiratory problems and much more; externally, it’s used to medicate snake bites and as a remedy for early greying of hair and skin diseases. A heated concoction of king-coconut oil and essence of the Curry Leaf is applied on the scalp for preventing early greying while leaves boiled in fresh milk and ground together is applied for skin problems.

Kohila
Both Kohila tubers and leaves are used locally in cooking and contain a high

concentration of fibre. It is highly recommended for intestinal ailments and proves an extremely effective remedy for hemorrhoids and liver afflictions.

Karavila/Bitter Gourd
Definitely an acquired taste due its bitter savor, Bitter Gourd is prepared in many ways. It's mostly curried and used fried or fresh in salads by the locals.
Karavila is renowned in indigenous medicine as an eradicator of toxins. However on the same note it also neutralises the effects of medication for poisons. It includes invaluable qualities that help abate diabetes, phlegm, cleanses the blood, increases appetite and much more.

Gova/Cabbage
Grown in the cooler climates of the hill country, Cabbage is had locally as curry, in soup, as a sambol or just plain boiled. Its medicinal qualities they say have even been spoken of as long ago as the time of Pythagoras who wrote that the vegetable had qualities that increased strength and mental health.
It is known to carry properties that prevent early aging, increases immunity and the power of healing in the human body, dissolves cholesterol and hence reduces high blood pressure and much more. High in Fluorine, Cabbage is also beneficial for teeth.

Murunga
Drumsticks

Having Drumsticks curry is a task in itself, but worth the effort once you taste its soft flavoursome flesh. What many of us may not know about Drumsticks is that it's well known as a natural aphrodisiac.

Vambatu
Brinjals/Eggplant

Eggplant; be it fried, curried, added on or pickled this is one vegetable many of us find difficult to say no to. It is known to induce sleep and for having a high iodine content. For earaches, the sliced Eggplant is burnt and the smoke emitted is blown into the ear cavity.
All variants in the Batu family inclusive of Vambatu, Thalanabatu, Thibbatu, Katuwel- batu, Naibatu and Kathrikka batu are recommended remedies for phlegmy constitutions.

Kekiri
Cucumber

Not your average cucumber, Kekiri is a variant of the same family. It’s known to have abilities to dissolve kidney stones, increase appetite, quench thirst and cure indigestion. In warm weather Kekiri seeds are ground, dissolved in water and used as a drink, which helps avoid dehydration and cools the body. Externally the ground concoction of its seeds together with its innards and water is applied on the scalp to ease severe headaches.

Rathu Lunu/Red Onions

Though snubbed due to its odour by all but a few, the onion can give a helping hand when overcome with a bad cold and when taken with a meal, assists digestion. It is even known to be beneficial for tuning up your voice and externally used as a disinfectant.

Imagine picking up your medical prescription from the grocery;
Take Karapincha, three times a day with meals, Karavila at lunch and Kekiri for dinner.

Popping pills for every ache and pain is a fast and easy cure to all illness excepting the common cold. But prevention as someone wisely put it, is, better than cure and what sure way to prevent troublesome ailments than to take your daily dose of veggies. Who needs apples to keep the doctor away, anyway!