Green Goodness in a Morning Cocktail: Kola Kenda

Posted on

Most Sri Lankans gulp down a morning mug of Kenda, a veritable magic potion that gives the drinker strength to face the day.

Gotu Kola, Mukunuwenna and Hathawariya kenda.

Kola Kenda, as it is popularly known throughout the countryside, can be made from various green leaves, each famed for its intrinsic nutritional values, but the process is the same for all. While Kenda may not have the power to cure you of any illness,

it is wholesome enough to prevent many of them, which is always better.

Every morning, a mug of kola Kenda will help you keep the body beautiful, detoxify physical impurities, and create the necessary equilibrium. This is done by maintaining, according to the humoralist and ayurvedic system, the four humors or elements at work, namely earth, wind, water, and fire, functioning at their optimum.

Brewing a mug for yourself

First, take a bundle of the recommended leaves of your choice. Wash it, chop it, blend it and extract the juice. Then strain it. Put a cup of rice into a pan and boil it with more water than you would use if you were making only rice. Boil the rice until it is cooked. Add the blended juice. Add a cup of coconut milk and salt. You can add a clove or two or garlic and a tablespoon of peppercorn. To make it more palatable, a piece of jaggery will come in handy when serving.

Sri Lanka’s herbal soups are consumed mainly in the morning during breakfast. Unless one has acquired a cultivated taste for it, this is usually gulped down, followed by a bite of jaggery to reduce its bitterness. It can be made thick or watery thin depending on one’s taste. But whatever the leaves used for the Kenda, they share two common traits: they are deep green in color and come crammed with nutrients that promise wonders for overall health.

Gotu Kola

Gotu Kola, Centella Asiatica is the most popular herbal soup and the most hailed for its nutritional value. Called the herb of enlightenment in Chinese medicine, it is commonly found in Sri Lanka.

Gotu Kola is known for its anti- inflammatory and rejuvenating properties. It improves memory, aids concentration, promotes healthy skin, nails, and hair, and increases efficient blood circulation. It keeps the nervous system in balance and helps with meditation.

Hathawariya and Wel-penela

Hathawariya or the wild asparagus is a shrub while Wel-penela is a climber. Its properties are known to promote healthy energy levels and boost the immunity system. It also promotes digestion and bowel movement, beats sleep disorders, and enhances kidney function. Hathawariya and Welpenela are also known to increase sexual libido.

Welpenela is a leaf found mainly in the wetlands and one that boasts properties to beat rheumatism and provides relief to those suffering from hemorrhoids. It is also used to allay nervous disorders and fight chronic bronchitis.

The ‘joy weed’ also known as Mukunuwenna

The energy drink in the leafy world is Mukunuwenna, power-packed with a mocktail of vitamins, proteins, iron, and fiber. Known as sessile joy weed, it is probably the most consumed leafy veg in Sri Lanka and helps restore digestive disorders while promoting stamina and strength.

The curry leaf, Karapincha, is both a stimulant and a relaxant and works as a mild laxative. It promotes clearer vision and reduces blood sugar and cholesterol levels. It also helps to purify the blood and is a good source of vitamins A, C, and K, calcium, and iron.

Apart from these, kola Kenda can be made from a host of other leaves, including Erabadu for dysentery, Polpala for kidneys, and the urinal tract. Neeramuliya for blood circulation, Kohila for piles, Eramusu for skin, and Olinda for heart. Rarer herbal soups are made of wild Kothamalli to reduce blood sugar, Kohomba (neem) to purify the blood, and Yati Narang to cure cough and phlegm. Although not a green herb, a special mention must be made for Kurakkan (finger millet) Kenda, popular and sought after for its fat-burning properties.

> An ideal morning mocktail that helps you work, rest and play better.

Kola Kenda not only nourishes and rejuvenates the entire system but also fortifies the body’s immunity to defy the onslaught of infection.

At a cosmetic level, a regular cuppa also produces smoother skin, a clearer

complexion, and boosts hair growth. It is an ideal morning mocktail, an energy drink that helps you work, rest and play better.

Enjoy a glass of nutritious kenda with a piece of jaggery.