Traditional Home Remedies Of Guyana

By Dmitri Allicock

"A wise man should consider that health is the greatest of human blessings, and learn how by his thought to derive benefit from his illnesses"

[Hippocrates -father of Western Medicine]

If you grew up in Guyana you would certainly be acquainted with some of these common over the —counter—medicines and remedies that brought relief for various afflictions and ailments. Corner stores carried a wide array of medicines found only in the Caribbean and Guyana. These were augmented with herbal medicines and treatments before a visit to the doctor was attempted.

Home remedies have been around for thousands of years. Even these days about 30 per cent of prescription drugs are still synthesised from plants. In fact, the word 'drug' comes from an old Dutch word, *drogge*, which means 'to dry' - which is how many plant medications were prepared. However, it is always wise to remember, just because something is "naturally" growing from a tree, doesn't mean it's safe to consume.

Our grandparents and older folks would swear of the healing properties of herbs, leaves, roots and seeds that cured diseases which they contracted. The fact that our ancestors survived proved that some of the many remedies used then, did work and have increasing practical applications today.

Arrowroot is a common plant of Guyana. Napoleon supposedly said the reason for the British



love of arrowroot was to support the commerce of their colonies. Archaeological studies in the Americas show evidence of arrowroot cultivation as early as 7,000 years ago. The name may come from *aru-aru* (meal of meals) in the language of the Caribbean Arawak people, for whom the plant was a staple. It has also been suggested that the name comes from arrowroot's use in treating poison-arrow wounds, as it draws out the poison when applied to the site of the injury. In the early days of carbonless copy paper, arrowroot, because of its fine grain size, was a widely used ingredient. After an economical way of

centrifugally separating wheat flour was devised, arrowroot lost its role in papermaking.

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People use starch taken from the root and rhizome (underground stem) to make medicine. Arrowroot is used as a nutritional food for infants and for people recovering from illness. It is also used for <u>stomach</u> and intestinal disorders, including <u>diarrhea</u>. Some people sooth painful gums and sore mouth by applying arrowroot directly to the affected area. Babies cut <u>teeth</u> on arrowroot cookies and the fine powder can be use for diaper rash. In foods, arrowroot is used as an ingredient in cooking. Arrowroot is often replaced with cheaper starches, including potato, corn, wheat, or rice starch. There is some scientific evidence that arrowroot may help get rid of <u>cholesterol</u> in the body. There isn't enough information to know how it works for stomach and intestinal problems or for other uses.



Mecuricome was used throughout the world and Guyana to treat minor cuts, scrapes, sores, and other external infectious conditions. The liquid was only sold in small quantities, since one application by Q-tip was extremely effective.

Mercurochrome is a trade name for merbromin, a compound containing mercury and bromine. Merthiolate is a trade name for thimerosal, a compound containing mercury and sodium. Both these compounds kill some (but not all) disease-causing microbes by denaturing enzymes and other proteins so that the microbes' metabolism is blocked; they do this by breaking up chemical bonds in the proteins. Both Mercurochrome and Merthiolate (and iodine preparations, too) sting when applied to broken skin and can actually interfere with healing at times, it is said. Experts now recommend that first aid kits contain

newer antibacterial creams, especially those containing bacitracins, a class of antibacterial first produced by other microorganisms.



Aloe (often called aloe vera) is a plant related to cactus and found growing all over Guyana. It produces two substances, gel and latex, which are used for medicines. Aloe gel is the clear, jelly-like substance found in the inner part of the aloe plant leaf. Aloe latex comes from just under the plant's skin and is yellow in color. Some aloe products are made from the whole crushed leaf, so they contain both gel and latex.

Aloe <u>medications</u> can be taken by mouth or applied to the skin. Aloe gel is taken by mouth for <u>osteoarthritis</u>, bowel diseases including ulcerative colitis, fever, itching and

inflammation, and as a general tonic. It is also used for <u>stomach</u> ulcers, <u>diabetes</u>, <u>asthma</u>, and for treating some side effects of <u>radiation</u> treatment. It also makes a great poultice for abscess or boils.



Shilling Oil is a Chinese external analgesic remedy good to rub on for cold or, blocked sinuses, headaches, minor muscle aches, arthritis, strains, closed bruises, sprains. Active Ingredients are Menthol 16%, Camphor 5%, and Salicylate 47%, plus dill oil, eucalyptus and lavender oil.



Buckley's White Rub belongs to this category of nasal decongestants and

minor remedies for aches very popular with Guyanese. The inhalation of its soothing medicated vapors helps break up nasal congestion to restore freer breathing. This non-greasy stainless rub penetrates quickly to relieve muscular, rheumatic and arthritic aches and pains. Buckley does also have a <u>cough syrup</u> invented in 1919 in Toronto, Ontario, and still produced today. Noted for its strongly unpleasant taste, its ingredients include ammonium carbonate, potassium bicarbonate, camphor, menthol, Canada balsam (*Abies balsamea*), pine needle oil, and a tincture of capsicum. It is promoted for relief of coughs and sore throats for up to six hours.



Cloves are the aromatic dried <u>flower buds</u> of a tree in the family <u>Myrtaceae</u>, *Syzygium aromaticum*. Cloves are native to the Maluku islands in Indonesia, is also found in the Caribbean and Guyana and have significant health benefits.

- ☐ Most commonly known use is for toothache. Oil of clove may be applied to the gum or a whole clove may be kept pressed on aching side between the teeth.
- ☐ It is safe and effective as mouth wash and for bad breath.
- \Box It can quickly relieve the running nose if that is due to exposure to cold. In mild cases just smelling the clove helps.
- ☐ It can be used as antibacterial, antiviral, antifungal and

antiseptic.

- ☐ It is an effective treatment for diarrhea and vomiting where the discharge is watery, not pasty.
- \Box It is a great help in cases of cholera and malarial fevers.
- □ Clove stimulates digestive system and helps indigestion, can help stomach ulcers but if it is associated with constipation and/or bleeding hemorrhoids, clove might not be the solution. Please keep its drying property in mind.
- □ Clove has the capability to cure cancers when used with a suitable herb having warm wet effects. Clove alone might not help in all cases of cancer. It must be used only under the advice of an experienced herbal practitioner.
- ☐ It is also used to treat psoriasis but it should be remembered that initially it might aggravate.

□ Applying oil of clove to the forehead and temples can relieve certain types of headache particularly those caused by cold.

 \Box Clove is also used to enhance sexual power in men. Oil of clove is said to be effective when used externally.

Clove Tea has a very unique flavor and aroma. The best part of drinking clove tea is the quick relief from nausea and the fresh breath you have afterwards. In fact chewing on a clove from time to time is the best breath mint ever and keeps nausea and heartburn away. Clove Tea is a great natural remedy to help cure the oral infection called Candida that sometimes comes with the over uses on antibiotics.



Most might remember the use of **M & B powder** on the many abrasions and scrapes of childhood. A sprinkling of this white powder on the wound for a few days was all that was required.

M & B, made by the British Company May & Baker, was one of the first generation of sulphonamide antibiotics; it has been reported as the first chemical cure for pneumonia. It could either be taken in tablet form or the powder could be placed in wounds. It was used so widely during the Second World War that May & Baker had difficulty keeping up with demand. It was later largely superseded by penicillin and sulphonamides.

May & Baker was a British chemical company. It was started by Mr. May and Mr. Baker in Wandsworth, London in 1851. They initially specialized in the manufacture of chemicals derived from Mercury and Bismuth. Over the years they diversified into other chemical fields including Photographic, Pharmaceuticals, Agrochemicals, and chemicals for Research and development.



Cascarilla is a Tonic and stimulant and comes from bark of the cascarilla tree *Croton eluteria*, native of the West and used in indigestion, flatulency, chronic diarrhea, debility or weakness and to arrest vomiting. In the past, cascarilla was added to tobacco before smoking because it has a pleasant odor when burned. Cascarilla also made the smoker feel light-headed and a bit intoxicated. Tincture from the bark is used as a tonic and stimulant, and a fever reducer. Cascarilla bark also used for making incense and to flavor the

liqueurs Campari and Vermouth and as one of the bitters of Guyana and the Caribbean.



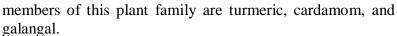
Dettol is a common antiseptic used in Guyana. Dettol liquid antiseptic and disinfectant is normally light yellow in color; but, as several of the ingredients in Dettol antiseptic are insoluble in water, it produces a white-coloured milky <u>emulsion</u> of oil droplets when diluted with water during use, exhibiting the <u>ouzo effect</u>.

Methylated Spirits Also known as denatured alcohol, Methylated Spirits is for the most part just plain alcohol (ethyl alcohol) is also a major antiseptic is Guyana. Methylated cotton balls were uses as an antiseptic before receiving an injection of medicine.

Other uses for Methylated spirits includes clean glass, if you're going to use it in hot conditions, dilute it with water. In fuel stoves, methylated spirits burns very cleanly; a little too cleanly in fact as it can be hard to see the flame.

Methylated spirits can be used to remove ink stains from upholstery or clothes and also permanent marker from PVC plastics. As a solvent for thinning paint, for cleaning paint brushes as an alternative to fossil fuel based solvents—a general metal cleaner for removing stickers and sticker residue from car windscreens.

Ginger or **ginger root** is the <u>rhizome</u> of the plant *Zingiber officinale*, consumed as a <u>delicacy</u>, <u>medicine</u>, or <u>spice</u>. It lends its name to its genus and family (<u>Zingiberaceae</u>). Other notable





Ginger cultivation began in South Asia and has since spread to East Africa and the Caribbean including Guyana.

Ginger's ability to combat a variety of diseases and conditions is due in part to its impact on excessive inflammation, which is a significant underlying cause of many illnesses. Inflammation is the body's natural healing response to illness or injury, and its pain, redness, heat, and swelling are attempts to keep you from moving a damaged area while it is being repaired. Inflammation subsides as the body heals. Other medical uses for ginger are found in treating cancer, diabetes prevention and complications,

antifungal, antibiotic, stomach ulcers, gastric distress, toxicity of many drugs, Gout, rheumatoid arthritis, motion sickness, bacterial diarrhea and much more. Ginger Tea is also said to have many healing attributes. It wouldn't be Christmas in Guyana without the special taste of one of Guyana's national drink called Ginger Beer.



Scott's Emulsion is a brand is a cod liver oil range of emulsions rich in natural sources of vitamin A and D, calcium, phosphorus and omega 3 trusted by mothers for generations in Guyana to help protect their children from coughs colds, and as a supplement to support growth and ward off infections. Even the most steadfast proponents of cod-liver oil, such as de Jongh and Bennett, admitted that the highly disagreeable taste and smell presented a significant hurdle to its use.

In 1873 Alfred B. Scott came to New York City and, along with partner Samuel W. Bowne, began experimenting to produce a less nauseating preparation of cod-liver oil. Three years later they established the firm of Scott and Bowne, and began marketing their product as Scott's Emulsion. Though not a doctor or pharmacist by training,

Scott had the eye for opportunity that was necessary for achievement in business. Advertising, the two men believed, would propel their product to success. And so it did: by the 1890s Scott and Bowne had factories in Canada, England, Spain, Portugal, Italy, and France, and advertised their emulsion throughout the Americas including Guyana, Europe, and Asia.



Haliborange dates back to the 1930s when it was marketed as the 'nicest way of taking Halibut Liver Oil,' At that time children were given fish oil supplements to provide vitamins A,C and D. Haliborange prided itself in the fresh juicy orange flavor and the fact that the syrup had no fishy taste. It was very popular in Guyana and highly recommended by doctors and well clinic for children.

Haliborange is a leading children's healthcare brand. It produces a range of supplements aimed specifically at children but adults love it also. Made by the UK's leading supplements manufacturer Seven Seas, Haliborange is the UK's number one children's supplement brand. Haliborange recognizes that for parents today it can be a challenge getting children to eat a healthy and balanced diet, which is why the range features a whole of host of different combinations of essential vitamins and minerals to help support a child's natural growth and development at every stage – from age one month to their teenage years.

There were other tonics and builder available including **Malt Extract and Cod Liver oil** from Seven Seas Ltd.



Lemongrass *Cymbopogon* is a genus of about 55 species of grasses, (of which the type species is *Cymbopogon citratus* [a natural and soft tea Anxiolytic]) native to warm temperate and tropical regions of the Old World and Oceania and found across Guyana. It is a tall perennial grass. Common names include lemon grass, lemongrass, barbed wire grass and fever grass in Guyana.

Lemongrass is used for treating digestive tract spasms, stomachache, <u>high blood pressure</u>, convulsions, pain, vomiting, cough, achy joints (rheumatism), fever, the common cold, and 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, stomach ache, abdominal pain and mild discomfort.

In food and beverages, lemongrass is used as a flavoring. For example, lemongrass leaves are commonly used as "lemon" flavoring in herbal teas. In manufacturing, lemongrass is used as a fragrance in soaps and cosmetics. Lemongrass is also used in making vitamin A and natural citral. Lemongrass might help prevent the growth of some bacteria and yeast. Lemongrass also contains substances that are thought to relieve pain, reduce fever, stimulate the uterus and menstrual flow, and have antioxidant properties.

Condy's Crystals or potassium permanganate is a dark purple crystalline compound and



disinfectant was easily available in Guyana for the treatment for fungal infections.

In 1659, <u>Johann Rudolf Glauber</u> fused a mixture of the mineral <u>pyrolusite</u> and <u>potassium carbonate</u> to obtain a material that, when dissolved in water, gave a green solution (<u>potassium manganate</u>) which slowly shifted to violet and then finally red. This report represents the first description of the production of potassium permanganate.

Condy's Crystals treats many skin infections, including eczema, canker sores, dermatitis, acne, vaginal thrush, vulvovaginitis and ringworm. Ringworm is a fungal

infection that develops on the top layer of your skin. It's characterized by an itchy, red circular rash with healthy-looking skin in the middle. Ringworm gets its name from the characteristic ring that can appear, but it has nothing to do with an actual worm under your skin. Ringworm, also called tinea corporis, ringworm of the body is closely related to other fungal infections with similar names, including athlete's foot (tinea pedis), jock itch (tinea cruris) and ringworm of the scalp (tinea capitis). **Nexiderm** is another topical cream good for these kinds of fungal infections.

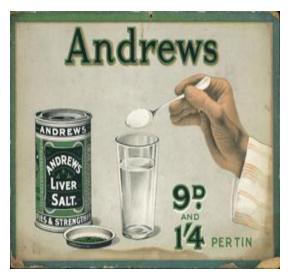


Soursop is the fruit of *Annona muricata*, a broadleaf, flowering, evergreen tree native to Mexico, Cuba, Central America, the Caribbean, and northern South America, primarily Colombia, Brazil, Peru, Ecuador, Venezuela and Guyana.

Not only does soursop taste good (despite its name), but it's also useful in treating and healing a wide array of medical problems, say people who use it for medicinal purposes. Soursop contains antimicrobial ingredients that can clear up fungal infections, bacterial infections, and intestinal parasites. People have also used soursop to lower blood pressure and treat depression and stress.

Soursop leaf extract widely believed to be one of the natural <u>diabetes medicine</u> that has efficacious benefits. Benefits of soursop leaf turned out 1000 times more powerful content and its ability of chemotherapy in treating cancer. This is based on the research that has been done, in ancient society's soursop leaves already known advantages and a lot of used to treat the disease.

Around the year 1965, various studies scientists prove soursop leaf extract cures better than chemotherapy; even those extracts may slow down the growth of cancer. In 1976, the National Cancer Institute of the United States has been conducting scientific research and the results stated rod and soursop leaves effective attack and destroy cancer cells. Other uses of the soursop leaves includes, treating back pain, diarrhea in infants, overcoming hemorrhoids, eliminating boils. Soursop leaf bath is a common home remedy for fever.



Andrews Liver Salts is great antacid treatment and was very popular in Guyana. It is an Effervescent powder containing magnesium sulphate (dihydrate), Sodium Hydrogen Carbonate and Citric Acid (anhydrous). And a product of GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Healthcare (Ireland) Ltd

Andrews' effervescent powder provides refreshing relief for an upset stomach, indigestion and over indulgence. At higher doses, it can be used as a laxative to relieve constipation.



Angostura bitters, often simply referred to as angostura, a concentrated bitters made of water, 44.7% alcohol, herbs and spices, by House of Angostura in Trinidad and Tobago. They are typically used for flavoring beverages, or (less often) food. The bitters were first produced in the town of Angostura (Ciudad Bolívar, Venezuela) (hence the name), and do not contain angostura bark. The bottle is easily recognizable by its distinctive over-sized label.

Angostura bitters are alleged to have restorative properties. It was reported to be a remedy for hiccups, also can be used as a cure for an upset stomach and biliousness. This name brand of bitters is said to contain over 40 ingredients, although few can know for sure, since the recipe, which was developed as medicine by a German doctor in Venezuela in 1824, is a closely guarded secret.



Senna (from Arabic *sanā*), is a large genus of flowering plants in the <u>family Fabaceae</u>, subfamily <u>Caesalpinioideae</u>. This diverse genus is native throughout the tropics, with a small number of species reaching into temperate regions. The number of species is usually estimated to be about 260, but some authors believe that there are as many as 350. The <u>type species</u> for the genus is <u>Senna alexandrina</u>. About 50 species of *Senna* are known in cultivation.

Senna is really only used for one thing, as a cathartic or laxative. Limited as it may be however, Senna is extremely effective at this particular job along with **Cascara Sagrada**, **Epson Salts**, **Carrion Crow Bush**, **Castor Oil**, **Carters Little Liver Pill** and a few others.

Older Guyanese cultural belief of regular bowel cleaning and a weekly cup of Senna were brewed for this purpose. Cleansing the bowel is an ancient therapy, dating back some 4000 years, where the process if both enema and laxative use were described in the Indu Vedas, which are the oldest known medical texts. The "Ebers Papyrus," an ancient Egyptian medical document written about 3000 years ago, describes bowl health describing the detail what to do for several bowel conditions. It cataloged many laxative herbs used to clean the bowel.



Limacol, "the freshness of a breeze in a bottle" is a favorite traditional splash on with older Guyanese for all occasions.

This toilet lotion contains a unique combination of alcohol and blended aromatic oils with a lime fragrance providing a clean fresh scent. Limacol can be used as an aftershave lotion, astringent, deodorant and make up remover. Rub On hot days, rub Limacol on your head, neck, face and arms for an instant refreshing feeling and wellness. It is supposed to relieve a host of illness including headache by applying it as a cool

compress or wrapping to the forehead.

Limacol is used mainly to refresh and uplift the spirit. In a study of 50 people with advanced lung cancer, those judged to have high "spiritual faith" responded better to chemotherapy and survived longer. There are many more studies that confirm that the belief of the healing powers of mind over body and afflictions hence Limacol may indeed have an important role to this end.



Ferrol Compound is a malt flavored tonic with anti-tussive properties and product of Guyana. It contains a unique blend of vitamins, iron and mineral salts including the active principles, vitamins A, D in cod liver oil. These ingredients help develop red blood cells and carry oxygen throughout the body. Build up your body to help fight off coughs and colds with Ferrol Compound.

Ferrol is fairly pleasant tasting and a favorite of both children and adults of Guyana.



Iodex, a household remedy in Guyana since 1910, Iodex ointment contains the active ingredients iodine, to help prevent the growth of bacteria on minor cuts and scrapes, and methyl salicylate. Known for its soothing vapors, methyl salicylate helps relieve congestion around sore, stiff muscles sprains and strains, thereby minimizing pain and discomfort. Promotes healing of minor cuts and scrapes. The numerous blows, bumps

and swelling of childhood created a special bond and familiarity between Iodex and Guyanese children.



Breadfruit leaves have properties for health, effective for treating a variety of diseases such as liver, hepatitis, tooth pain, itching, and enlargement of the spleen, heart, and kidneys. Breadfruit leaves can cure liver, heart and kidney disease, it is said.

Breadfruit leaves are also believed to contain some nutritious substances such as hydrocyanic acid, asetilcolin, tannins, riboflavin, and so on. These substances are also able to overcome inflammation. Moreover, empirically, breadfruit leaf is able to save the ailing kidney. A study conducted by researchers from the Chinese LIPI also

revealed that breadfruit leaf is very useful for the healing process of cardiovascular disease.

Other than this the fibers present in breadfruit help those with diabetes to control the disease to some extent by reducing the absorption of glucose. Consuming breadfruit on a regular basis can reduce the risk of developing colon cancer. Breadfruit leaf is believed to lower blood pressure and is also believed to reduce asthma. Toasted flowers of the breadfruit tree are also rubbed on the gums as a cure for tooth ache. Captain Cook may rest a bit easier to see that his 1769 introduction of breadfruit from the Pacific to the Caribbean as a cheap carbohydrate alternative is now providing all sorts of medical relief today.

Sweetbroom is another common herb of Guyana and the Caribbean noted for many healing



qualities. Sweetbroom belongs to the family of the Scrophulariaceae and found growing wild around Guyana. It is a perennial erect herb that grows up to the height of 2-3 feet, bears stalk less serrated leaves are 3-4 X 1-1.5 cm wide with small white hairy flowers rising from the axis. The stamens are greenish and the ovary is green. The capsule is nearly round. The whole plant Sweet-broom weed increases the function of renal and helps in dissolving kidney stones and controlling hypertension. The entire plant is harvested, dried and drank as a tea for various ailments.

Sweetbroom has been used as a remedy for diabetes in India and hypertension in Taiwan. Traditionally, the fresh or dried plant has been used as a remedy for treating stomach ailments, hypertension, diabetes, inflammation, bronchitis, hemorrhoids, and hepatitis, and as an analgesic and antipyretic agent {pain and fever}.

A hot water infusion and/or decoction of the leaves or whole plant is used medicinally by indigenous tribes of Nicaragua to treat malaria, stomach disorders, menstrual disorders, insect bites, fevers, heart problems, liver disorders, and venereal disease. It has been used for blood cleansing, as an aid to child-birth, and as a general tonic.

The herb is used in Brazilian folk medicine to treat bronchitis, gastric disorders, hemorrhoids, insect bites, and wounds. The herb is used in Asian medicine to treat hypertension.

The ethno veterinary use of the plant dates back to 1889 in Trinidad as a topical lotion to treat impetigenous and herpetic eruptions. Many of the indications for the plants use parallel those practiced in veterinary folk medicine. Mucilage is released when the whole plant is soaked in water, thus helping to protect and regenerate normal cells; it may also act as an immunostimulator. The plant has been used to treat skin rashes in Martinique and Trinidad, for irritated skin in Brazil, and as a multi-ingredient preparation for treating burns in eastern Nicaragua. In Paraguay, the plant is used to kill lice and fleas, and used against vermin. The plant is also valued for its analgesic, anti-inflammatory, anticancer, and antiviral activity.



Coconut oil the product of the meat of the coconut is used for a variety of illnesses. While coconut oil has dragged itself out of the muck of vast misrepresentation over the past few years, it still rarely gets the appreciation it truly deserves. Not just a "good" saturated fat, coconut oil is an exceptional healing agent as well, with loads of useful health applications as believed by Guyanese for generations.

Coconut oil is used for diabetes, heart disease, chronic fatigue, Cohn's disease, irritable bowel syndrome,

Alzheimer's disease, thyroid conditions, energy, and boosting the immune system. Ironically, despite coconut oil's high calorie and saturated fat content, some people used it to lose weight and lower cholesterol. Coconut oil is sometimes applied to the skin as a moisturizer and to treat a skin condition called psoriasis.

Coconut oil is also used as a brain booster, clearing head lice, healing wounds, anti stomach ulcer activity, antifungal, testosterone booster, reducing swollen prostate, improving blood lipids, as a sun screen and it also have anti inflammatory and fever reducing properties.

Crabwood Seed Oil is produced in Guyana from the seeds of the Crabwood tree (Carapa



guianensis), which is common to seasonally inundated forests. It is a member of the Meliaceae family, and widely distributed throughout eastern Amazonia, the Guianas, Trinidad, and Central America as far north as Nicaragua. It is found throughout Guyana, mainly in the marshlands or on the hydromorphic soils of the Cuyuni-Supenaam Region, but large numbers can be found across the entire country.

The tree is a sought-after hardwood, and the oil derived from the seeds is known throughout the Amazon Region.

In the indigenous languages of the Arawak, Patamona and Akawaio populations of Guyana, it is known as Karaba oil. However, in wider Guyana it is commonly referred to by its Creole name, Crab oil. In Brazil, Europe and North America it is traded under the name of Andiroba oil. While the species is most often used as a source of hardwood, its other uses have important potential, and need to be examined so that appropriate management regimes can be developed.

Commercialization of Crabwood oil has spread through the countries of the Amazon Region. Because of its known benefits, Amerindian communities of rural Guyana and elsewhere have developed methods of processing the seeds within their households. The oil has also become a worthwhile income-generating commodity for some of these people, and indeed it is one of only a few herbal medicines traded in the interior of the country.

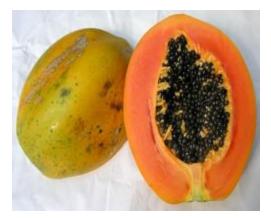
Combined with arnica and rosemary oils, it is promoted as a trauma massage and anti-rheumatic ointment. Indeed this non-toxic and odorless oil is becoming much better known internationally, suggesting positive marketing opportunities for producers throughout the Guianas.

As a homeopathic remedy, the oil is used for dandruff, rashes and as a laxative. It is also used for various skin care uses such as an insect repellent, antifungal for finger & toenails, and as a moisturizer. Candles made of Crabwood seed oil as a great mosquito repellent including those that transmit dengue.



Lemons are always plentiful in Guyana and are used for a number of conditions. Lemons have been used as a medicinal for centuries. Roman's notorious Nero consumed lemons as a preventative antidote to poisoning. Lemons were also used aboard ships to prevent scurvy in the early history of Guyana and the Caribbean. Lemons can help lower blood sugar in diabetics and the antioxidants found in the golden fruit can help keep skin healthy and youthful. Other uses for lemons includes, treating colds, soothing sore throat, dandruff control, relief of constipation, treating insect bites, bad breath, and treatment for feet by softening and exfoliation of dried tissues.

Lemons rich in vitamin C neutralize free radicals link to aging and most type of disease and contains 22 anti-cancer compounds. The high citric acid of the lemon juice dissolves gallstones, calcium deposit and kidney stones. The acidity of the lemon also restores the body's P H and physical well being.



Paw- Paw, Papaw, Papaya Tree Melon (botanical name Carica Papaya), it has oblong shape, normally greenish yellow, yellow or orange color. It found all over Guyana and used primarily as a fruit but has been known to have many medical qualities. The leaves and seeds are used for various ailments and are believed to vitalize the whole body by boosting the immune system.

It helps with nausea, constipation, alleviates inflammation, lower the risk of emphysema in smokers

by the high level of vitamin A it contains. It also prevents cataract formation, used as a topical treatment for wounds and a variety of other illnesses including colon cancer and conditions of the cardiovascular and gastrointestinal systems.



The Congo Pump is a common tree found around Guyana and is known as a pioneer or secondary species which means it is opportunistic and when large clearings are made in the forest it establishes itself and colonizes. The inner bark provides a useful fiber and the latex has been used in native medicines. The hollow branches can be used as pipes or to make flutes. The leaves and bark of the local species (especially C. obtusa) are used to produce a type of bush tea and helps with hypertension and kidney diseases.



The calabash was one of the first cultivated plants in the world, grown not primarily for food, but for use as a water container. The bottle gourd may have been carried from Africa to Asia, Europe and the Americas in the course of human.migration. It shares its common name with that of the calabash tree (*Crescentia cujete*).

The pulp of the fruit has medicinal properties and acts as a remedy for respiratory problems such as asthma and cough. It contains hydrocyanic acid which is considered as a purgative. The syrup prepared from the pulp is used as a medicine for relieving disorders of the chest or

respiratory tract and also to cure dysentery and stomach aches. The leaves of the Calabash Tree are used to reduce blood pressure. The decoction of the tree bark is used to clean wounds and also to treat hematomas and tumors. It is said that the fruit of the Calabash Tree when roasted is a good treatment for menstrual cramps or to induced childbirth and that the leaf can be used in tea to treat colds and headaches.

The integration of over- the -counter medicines with those of the natural world relieved many afflictions and promoted healthy bodies in Guyana. Grandma's Aloe poultice of flour for an abscess, that cost virtually nothing when compared to a Harvard educated doctor's scalpel, operating room, impatient stay, intravenous antibiotics and follow up care, is astonishing and spoke wonders of the old remedies of Guyana. A sprinkling of M&B power was all that it took to heal a small wound. An application of Soft Grease on a splinter or plimper embedded in a wound, extracted the foreign object and promoted healing.

The tens of thousands of the Guyanese diaspora are only too willingly to purchase some of these great memories of that simpler time, a bottle of Ferrol Compound, Crabwood Seed Oil or Shilling Oil in their homes symbolized respect for those unique concoctions of home remedies of Guyana.

It is both intriguing and spellbinding to look back and some of the benefits of these simple cost effective treatments; ironically, we might be actually seeing the future of some pharmaceuticals. Traditional home remedies of Guyana have indeed earned its place in history; the qualities of some of our natural remedies are only now being understood and may change the course of many medications and treatments of the future.