

**Medicinal Plants of Dominica: A pictorial field guide**



**By: Rachel Zammit TAMU  
Study Abroad 1998**

**Definition:**

In Dominican culture and literature many herbs are spoke of to be cooling. Cooling means to the Dominicans that the herb re-aligns anything that is off balance in the body, and purifies the blood.

Pictures of the following two plants may be found in the 1996 Field Guide to Flora of S.C.E.P.T.R.E.

**Common name:** Bay Rum

**Scientific name:** *Pimenta racemos* (Mill) J. W. Moore var. *racemos*

**Family:** Myrtaceae

**Part of plant used:** leaves

**Location:** In drive way of ATRC

**Uses:** Baths to refresh and relax, tea to counteract chills, relieve headaches, stimulate digestion and relieve flatulence.

**Common name:** Mimosa (Sensitive)

**Scientific name:** *Mimosa pudica* L.

**Family:** Mimosaceae

**Part of plant used:** Whole plant

**Location:** Found at Mt. Joy and all along roadsides in Springfield.

**Uses:** For inflammation, and a diuretic for urinary disorders.



**Common name:** Soursop

**Scientific name:** *Annona muricata* (L.)

**Family:** Annonaceae

**Part of plant used:** leaves and fruit

**Location:** In tire garden beneath Springfield guest house.

**Uses:** Leaves in teas and baths for cooling, teas for colds and fevers. The fruits are excellent ripe or may be cooked as a vegetable when ripe. The leaves also deter lice and mosquitoes. Leaves aid in sleeping but are dangerous when over used.



**Common name:** Salade `a Lapins

**Scientific name:** *Emelia fosbergii* Nicolson

**Family:** Asteraceae

**Part of plant used:** Leaves

**Location:** On road up to Mt. Joy, also found along roadsides all over Dominica

**Uses:** Salads and livestock fodder.



**Common name:** Japana

**Scientific name:** *Eupatorium triplineive* Vahl.

**Family:** Asteraceae

**Part of plant used:** Leaves

**Location:** Found in tire garden beneath the Springfield guest house.

**Uses:** Fever, flu, colds in chest, and as a poultice for sores on the skin.



**Common name:** Tansy

**Scientific name:**

**Family:** Asteraceae

**Part of plant used:** Leaves

**Location:** Found in tire garden beneath Springfield guest house.

**Uses:** Used for worms, fever, repels insects as an abortifacient. This is a very dangerous herb.



**Common name:** Papaya, Paw Paw

**Scientific name:** *Carica papaya* L.

**Family:** Caricaceae

**Part of plant used:** Leaves and ripe fruit and the latex from the unripe fruit.

**Location:** Common cultivated plant throughout Dominica, picture was taken at the entrance gate to ATRC.

**Uses:** Latex from the unripe fruit is for stomach ulcers, aids digestion, also used as a meat tenderizer, as well as the ripe fruit. Seeds abortifacient, and applied topically will eliminate ringworm, a general cure-all.



**Common name:** Castor Bean

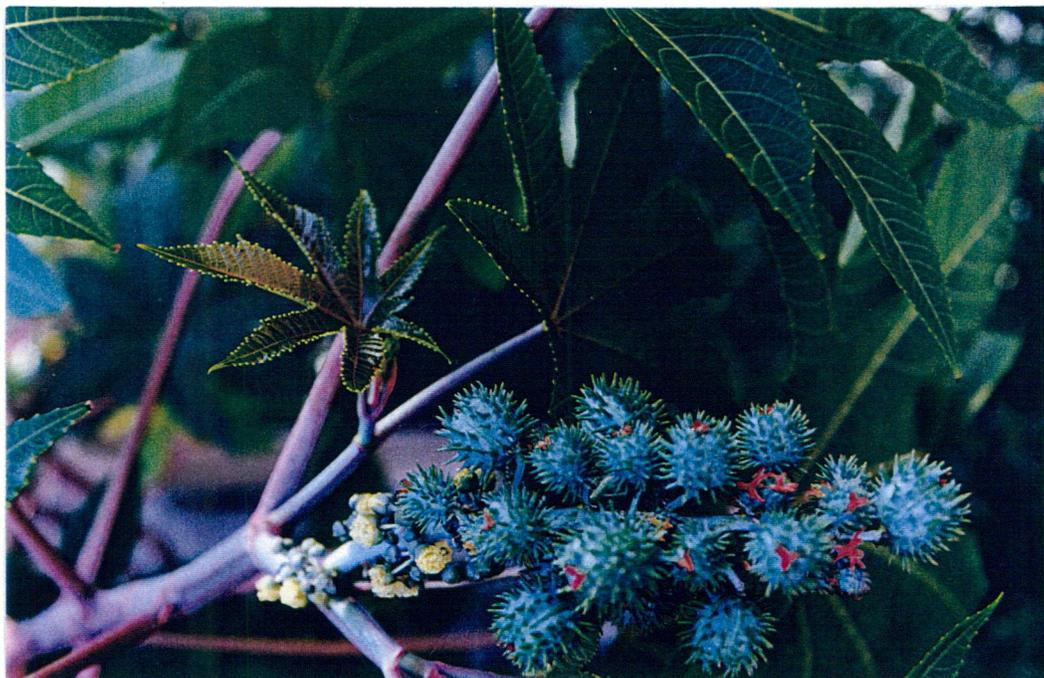
**Scientific name:** *Ricinus communis* L.

**Family:** Euphorbiaceae

**Part of plant used:** Seed and leaves.

**Location:** Found throughout Dominica, the picture was taken at the entrance to Cabrits National Park, (castor is an escaped species).

**Uses:** Used as a hair and scalp dressing to promote hair growth, leaves as a compress for internal pain. The oil is also used for stomach aches and as a purgative.





**Common name:** Basil

**Scientific name:** *Ocimum basilicum*

**Family:** Lamiaceae

**Part of plant used:** leaves

**Location:** In tire garden beneath Springfield guest house.

**Uses:** Very commonly culinary, as a carminative. Mosquito repellent, used in the bath to cleanse from poisoning, tea for colds and the liver.



**Common name:** Large leafed thyme

**Scientific name:**

**Family:** Lamiaceae

**Part of plant used:** Leaves

**Location:** Found in tire garden beneath the Springfield guest house.

**Uses:** Mainly used for culinary purposes, and as a carminative.



**Common name:** Thyme

**Scientific name:** *Thymus vulgaris* L.

**Family:** Lamiaceae

**Part of plant used:** leaves

**Location:** Found in the tire garden beneath the Springfield guest house.

**Uses:** Mainly culinary, aids in digestion and stimulates appetite.



**Common name:** Raspberry

**Scientific name:** *Rubus rosifolium* Sm.

**Family:** Roseaceae

**Part of plant used:** Fruit and leaves

**Location:** On the road up to Mt. Joy and along roadsides all over Dominica.

**Uses:** Tea for diarrhoe, dysentery, helps stop vomiting. Prevents miscarriage, and reduces labor pains, also increases lactation. Fruit is restorative and calming.



**Common name:** Bird Pepper

**Scientific name:** *Capsicum frutescens* L.

**Family:** Solanaceae

**Part of plant used:** leaves and fruit

**Location:** Found in tire garden beneath Springfield Guest House.

**Uses:** Produces natural warmth, and improves blood circulation, and stimulates the immune system. Relieves gripe or colic. The leaves clear blood and speed the healing of wounds and sores, due to their anti-bacterial property.



**Common name:** Chadron (or Chadon) Beni

**Scientific name:** *Eryngium foetidum*

**Family:** Umbelliferae (Ammiaceae)

**Part of plant used:** Leaf

**Location:** Tire garden beneath the Springfield guest house

**Uses:** In cases of epilepsy to reduce the incidence of convulsions, for liver and kidney troubles, a cure-all type of herb.



**Common name:** Anise

**Scientific name:** *Foeniculum vulgare* Mill

**Family:** Umbelliferae

**Part of plant used:** seed, leaves, and stem

**Location:** Found in the tire garden beneath the Springfield guest house.

**Uses:** For flatulence, colic, stomach trouble, improves appetite, increases lactation, relieves menstrual or intestinal cramps, and is a blood cleanser.



**Common name:** Rosemary

**Scientific name:** *Rosemarinus officinale*

**Family:**

**Part of plant used:** leaves and stems

**Location:** Found in the tire garden beneath Springfield guest house.

**Uses:** A general tonic herb, stimulating, preventative to cancer, astringent, mouthwash and hair rinse.



**Common name:** Lemongrass, Citronelle

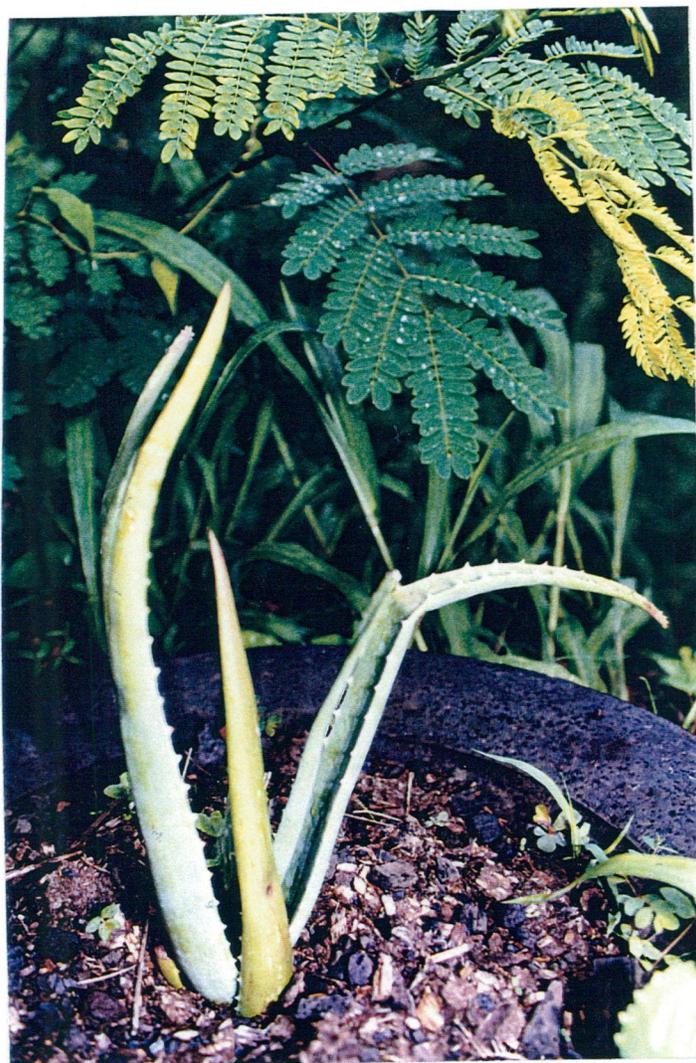
**Scientific name:** *Andropogon citratus* (DC.) Stapf.

**Family:** Gramineae (Poaceae)

**Part of plant used:** All

**Location:** Everywhere throughout Springfield, (this is an invasive species)

**Uses:** Originally brought to Dominica for the extraction of citronelle. Made as a tea for colds, flu, and fever. Literature states that it is also used in baths against poisoning (1) (3).



**Common name:** Aloe vera

**Scientific name:** *Aloe vera* (L.) Burm R.

**Family:** Liliaceae

**Part of plant used:** leaves

**Location:** In tire garden beneath Springfield guest house.

**Uses:** The leaf is used for wounds or headaches, the fluid is as purgative.



**Common name:** Ginger

**Scientific name:** *Zingiber officinale* Roscoe

**Family:** Zingerberaceae

**Part of plant used:** Entire plant

**Location:** Found in tire garden beneath the Springfield guest house.

**Uses:** Digestive stimulant, stomach aches, a warming herb (it makes you feel warm).

## References

Ayensu, E. S. 1981. Medicinal plants of the West Indies. Reference Publications, Inc., Michigan.

Caesar, D. 1997. The healer is here. Frontline Co-operative Services Limited, Roseau, Dominica.

Honeychurch, P. N. 1992. Caribbean wild plants and their uses. The Macmillan Press Ltd, London.

Luke, (Brother) Matthew (Interview). 1998. Box 377 Roseau, Dominica, West Indies.

Paris, P., and J. Higginis. 1992. Carib Medicinal Plants. Archibold Tropical Research Center Library.

Prevost, Trudi (Interview). 1998. Springfield Guest House, Springfield, Dominica.

#### References

Ayensu, E. S. 1981. Medicinal plants of the West Indies. Reference Publications, Inc., Michigan.

Caesar, D. 1997. The healer is here. Frontline Co-operative Services Limited, Roseau, Dominica.

Honeychurch, P. N. 1992. Caribbean wild plants and their uses. The Macmillan Press Ltd, London.

Luke, (Brother) Matthew (Interview). 1998. Box 377 Roseau, Dominica, West Indies.

Paris, P., and J. Higginis. 1992. Carib Medicinal Plants. Archibold Tropical Research Center Library.

Prevost, Trudi. 1998. Springfield Guest House. Springfield, Dominica.