

Poster

Medicinal Plants in Castilla-La Mancha home-gardens

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Introduction. Castilla-la Mancha is located in the centre of the Iberian Peninsula, where home-gardens are extremely important in supporting a variety of plants valuable to the life and culture of the local people. The uses of the plants grown there include: fruits & vegetables for human consumption, food for livestock, plants for handicrafts and aromatic plants (used as seasonings, ornamentals and medicines).

Objectives. To study the traditional home-gardens, in Castilla-La Mancha, with focus on medicinal plants. The analysis of the species grown, their uses and management.

Methods. Following an standardized interview model, to date we have studied over thirty different traditional home-gardens, the majority being kept by elder people in/from rural areas.

Results. The home-gardens studied are usually located within the yards of houses. Here they are normally small gardens with a significant presence of ornamental plants. The larger home-gardens tend to be specialized in the cultivation of vegetables (sometimes sold locally). These larger home-gardens are primarily located in river valleys or close to areas with easy access to water from streams or underground sources. Home-gardens were, in the past, fundamental to the survival of the rural populations. Today, the tradition has lost part of the meaning associated with the livelihood of local people in the area. It is however still practiced, more generally now as a free-time job for retired people or farmers.

Conclusion. Home-gardens play a substantial role as repositories of local cultivars (ethnovarieties) (agrobiodiversity) and as an accessible source of medicinal plants used in health management at household level. We present the medicinal plant species grown in these home-gardens, either wild plants gathered from the forest in the nearby or domesticated plant species.

Keywords: ethnopharmacology, Iberian Peninsula, Traditional Knowledge

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