Useful Wild Plants of the Natives in Sabah, Malaysia.

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CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION
   1. Geography
   2. Vegetations
   3. Plant Resources
   4. Land use
      1. Land conservations

2. THE NATIVES OF SABAH
   1. Population
   2. Traditional life styles
   3. Traditional Forest Resource Areas

3. USEFUL PLANTS
   1. DOCUMENTATIONS (Species)

4. CONCLUSION
5. REFERENCES
1.0 INTRODUCTION: SABAH

* Located on the northern part of the island of Borneo.
* Sabah is one of the 13 member states of The Federation of Malaysia in 1963.
* The capital is Kota Kinabalu.
1.1 GEOGRAPHICALLY

- Western part of Sabah is generally mountainous.
- The most prominent range is the Crocker Range which houses several mountains of varying height from about 1,000 metres to 4,000 metres.
- At the height of 4,095 metres, Mount Kinabalu is the highest mountain in Malaysia.
- The jungles of Sabah are classified as tropical rainforests and host a diverse array of plant and animal species.
The forests of Sabah are classified as tropical rainforests.

Beach vegetations, Mangrove forest, Lowland Mixed Dipterocarps forest, Upland Mixed Dipterocarps forest, Lower Montane forest, Upper montane forest and Alpine forest.
1. Estimation in **Borneo** = about 15,000 species of flowering plants.
2. Estimation in Sabah = 10,000 species.
3. **Kinabalu Park area:**
   * Monocotyledons = 530 species (Palm = 81 species)
   * Dicotyledon = 1,569 species
1.4 LAND USE
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>1.4.1 LAND CONSERVATIONS</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Protected areas covering <strong>15.95%</strong> of the total land area (1,174,398 hectares).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* <strong>Forestry Department</strong>: Protection Forest Reserves and Virgin Jungle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* <strong>Sabah Parks Board of Trustees</strong>: Sabah Parks and Conservation Areas under Sabah Foundation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* <strong>Local and Housing Ministry</strong>: State lands.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Native / Indigenous peoples of Sabah are people who are the earliest (~1,000 years ago) community inhibited Sabah and have been utilized plants and other wildlife around their place of living for centuries.

In Sabah they are termed as the *natives* or *anak negeri*.

They are also very diverse and are estimated to be 39 different ethnic groups.
## 2.1 Population in Sabah – 2010 Census

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dusun / Kadazan</td>
<td>17.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murut</td>
<td>3.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bajau</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brunei Malay</td>
<td>5.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other bumiputra</td>
<td>20.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>9.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other non-bumiputra</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Malaysian citizen</td>
<td>27.81%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The largest indigenous group, the Dusun/Kadazan live primarily on the west coast and in the interior region.

- Kadazandusuns are made up of 92 sub-ethnic groups.
- Traditionally cultivators of rice, their ritual celebrations revolved around the rice cycle.
MURUT People

Murut

- inhabiting northern inland regions of Borneo and the borders of Indonesia and Sarawak.
- they remain great hunters with fascinating skills when using **blowpipes**, spears and poisoned darts.
- Murut, consists of The Murut people comprises of 29 sub-ethnic groups eg. Nabai, Peluan, Bokan, Tagal and Timogun.
Bajau people

Bajau

Coastal areas

- Bajau people, those living on the **west coast** and the ones from the east coast.
- also known as Sama comprises of 10 sub-ethnic groups.
- The Bajaus in the west make a living through farming and other agricultural domain. They are rear farm animals like buffaloes, ponies and cattles..
- the ones residing in the **east coast** of the state, they are fishermen by nature. Known to be 'Sea Gypsies', these Bajaus spent most of their lives seafaring.
Traditionally indigenous communities in Sabah have close ties to the land and see themselves as part of the whole ecosystem. Land means the forest, rivers, agricultural and coastal areas. Land is not only seen as a means of production and livelihood – for example, hunting and gathering – but also as part of indigenous people’s spiritual and cultural traditions. Indigenous Peoples depend on natural resources within traditional territory for daily life, hunting, collecting/gathering, farming, water source, fishing, building materials herbs etc comes from land, forest and rivers or sea.
For generations, indigenous peoples have been practicing traditional resource management system based on the “use and protect” concept.

Traditionally indigenous communities established community conserved area, which called pulau, puru, sogindai, tanah simpan etc.

This site is considered sacred and owned communally with set of customary law, beliefs and taboos to guard the area.
3.0 USEFUL PLANTS

CATEGORIES

1. Medicinal / Poisonous Plants
2. Constructions
3. Musicals
4. Rituals/Cultural
5. Food Plants
   1. Edible Fruits
   2. Edible Vegetables (incl. leaves and stems)
3.1 DOCUMENTATIONS (Species)

3. Martin, G. et. al. (2002) = 1,668 spp. (All categories)

**TOTAL = 3,304**
4.0 The Role of Local Communities in Sustainable Utilization of Useful Plants in Sabah

* The inter-relationship of plants and local communities are so intricate that their social and economic well-being often depends on good management of plant and other natural resources.

* A sense of ownership of plants found within their territories.

* Local communities understand that one of the responsibilities bestowed to them by their ancestors is to respect and care for the environment.

* They have ‘Adat’ and ‘Sogit’ cultures that keep them from destroying plants and the forests in Sabah.
5.0 CONCLUSION

* A total of **3,304 species** (approx.) of wild plants was documented as at 2013 in Sabah.

* **Categories included:**
  1. Medicinal / Poisonous Plants
  2. Food Plants (Edible Fruits or Edible Vegetables (incl. leaves and stems
  3. Others i.e. Constructions, Musicals, Rituals/Cultural etc...
REFERENCES


Institute for Tropical Biology and Conservation, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia.

APAFRI

Dr. Sim Heok-Choh, secretariat.
THANK YOU – TERIMA KASIH