

Some of the Insect and Fungal Pests of Stored Crude Drugs in U.P. Hills

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The study gives an account of Insects and infestation of fungi and thereby deterioration of the stored crude drugs around Ranikhet (1700 MSL), covered with pine dominated forest. It was observed that more than 20 raw drugs were infested by 6-7 insect species and the damage recorded was from 10%—25%. Similarly 7 raw drugs were infected by 6 species of fungi and damage ranged from 10-25%.

Like other plant products, medicinal plants and raw drugs are also prone to pests and pathogens attack, naturally resulting in their qualitative and quantitative deterioration (K.C. Tiwari *et al* 1974 and K.C. Tiwari *at al* 1974). Further the efficacy and usefulness of raw drugs, whether used single or in combination with others, in various recipes also depend, to a large extent, on proper storage after their timely collection and processing, which includes cleaning and drying. (Treare, 1938 and Ayurvedic Formulary).

The post harvest handling of the crude drugs, keeping them free of insect infestation and other pathological organisms is an equally important operation as proper growing and collection of the drugs. Only a properly stored drug can offer the quality required for effective medicine as the active contents easily get destroyed to a considerable extent due to faulty storage.

Various fungi and insects/pests often attack the stored raw drugs. It has been an observation of the authors that even in the climatic condition of Ranikhet (Table-I) which is normally considered unfavourable for growth and development of insect/pests and fungi, the stored crude drugs are attacked by them, spring month onward reaching maximum during the rainy season and lowest during winter. The observations are summarised in the chart below. (Table-II and III). They are primarily qualitative in nature.

The communication indicates the need for further detailed observation regarding

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