

AN EVALUATION OF TURKISH ETHNOBOTANICAL STUDIES (1928-1997)**

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S U M M A R Y

This article summarizes and evaluates a total of 765 Turkish ethnobotanical studies conducted over the 70 year period between 1928-1997, which began with the adoption of the Roman alphabet. It found that the greatest number of publications were on the usage of plants in the provinces of Sivas, Istanbul and Konya, and that the most common usages of plants in all the publications were as remedies, foodstuffs and for divination.

Ö Z E T

Bu makalede Latin harflerinin kabulünden itibaren 1928-1997 yıllarını kapsayan 70 yıllık dönemde yapılmış Türkiye ile ilgili 765 adet etnobotanik yayım kısaca değerlendirilmiştir. Bitkilerin kullanımıyla ilgili en fazla yayımın Sivas, İstanbul ve Konya illerine ait olduğu; en sık olarak da tedavi, gıda ve çeşitli inanışlar alanında kullanıldığı saptanmıştır.

Key words: Ethnobotany, Turkey, Archive, Evaluation

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INTRODUCTION

Thanks to Turkey's extensive floral diversity and the many civilizations in its history, its people possess a rich store of traditional botanical knowledge. In line with worldwide trends, in recent years in Turkey there has been a considerable increase in research into traditional use and knowledge of plants.

However these ethnobotanical studies are not easy to access as their sources are very varied. These sources: books, chapters in books, almanacs, articles in faculty journals or private folkloric ones and theses can be found in libraries listed in botany, medicine, agriculture, forestry, folklore, anthropology or even archaeology indexes. Information regarding an edible wild plant, for example can be found in a cooking book or an almanac. Furthermore, some cited folkloric journals no longer exist, cannot be found in public archives and many cited theses have never been published.

The authors have prepared a bibliography and archive of studies conducted between 1928, when the Turkish script was first Romanized, and 1997, in order to aid researchers. The aim of this article is to publicise this bibliography and to summarise the Turkish ethnobotanical studies contained in it according to date, province and usage of plant.

Work on compiling Turkish ethnobotanical studies has been underway since 1993 (Yazıcıoğlu, 1993; Akalın, 1993; Alpınar & Saçlı 1997). The national ethnobotanical archives have been summarized in a thesis by one of the authors (Sadıkoğlu, 1998), excerpts of which have been published (Alpınar & Sadıkoğlu, 1998). The authors are presently preparing a comprehensive ethnobotanical bibliography for publication. A fully updated database is also preparing in the Department of Pharmaceutical Botany, Istanbul University.

MATERIAL and METHODS

A total of 765 studies related to ethnobotany were found by searching bibliographies, catalogues, almanacs, theses, universities and public libraries. An archive of copies was formed and catalogued by the authors' name. The studies were briefly summarised on a form under 5 main headings: details of the study itself, plant name, author's name, traditional use of plant, and miscellaneous information on plant. This form assisted the researchers to gather substantial information for the ethnobotanical assessment. This data was then tabulated according to date of study, area of study and traditional use of the plant studied.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the number of studies per year, for the period 1928-1997. It reveals the number of ethnobotanical publications to have significantly increased during the last three decades (Table 1).

Table 1. Number of ethnobotanical studies conducted in Turkey during the period 1928-1997.

YEAR	ITEM	YEAR	ITEM	YEAR	ITEM	YEAR	ITEM	YEAR	ITEM	YEAR	ITEM	YEAR	ITEM
1928	0	1938	9	1948	3	1958	4	1968	13	1978	16	1988	13
1929	1	1939	18	1949	1	1959	5	1969	11	1979	13	1989	27
1930	11	1940	8	1950	0	1960	4	1970	8	1980	7	1990	23
1931	5	1941	13	1951	4	1961	7	1971	21	1981	7	1991	24
1932	0	1942	1	1952	5	1962	6	1972	13	1982	19	1992	22
1933	7	1943	7	1953	5	1963	6	1973	22	1983	15	1993	21
1934	8	1944	3	1954	3	1964	4	1974	19	1984	26	1994	16
1935	10	1945	6	1955	3	1965	8	1975	15	1985	23	1995	17
1936	8	1946	1	1956	6	1966	8	1976	19	1986	19	1996	15
1937	8	1947	8	1957	4	1967	11	1977	24	1987	31	1997	17
1928-1937	58	1938-1947	74	1948-1957	34	1958-1967	63	1968-1977	165	1978-1987	176	1988-1997	195

Of the total of 765 publications, the majority were in periodicals, of which 73 were faculty journals and 359 were in journals of folklore and 111 were in elsewhere. Of the rest, 25 were in the form of a book, 94 in a chapter of a book, 77 in proceedings and 26 in theses.

Of these publications, 557 were in Turkish and 28 in English, French or German, 237 used both vernacular names and their scientific equivalents and 36 gave only scientific ones. However 492 of them reported only vernacular names. Of the publications, 216 contained plant descriptions and 90 contained illustrations or photographs of the plants. In 237 of the publications, there was no information about the plant source. The natural location of the plant was given in 339 of the publications and 45 provided details of the herbal dealer supplying the plant. In 141 of the publications there was no information about the reference people.

Table 2 shows the number of ethnobotanical studies according to province. It reveals the provinces in which the most studies were conducted to be Sivas, İstanbul and Konya.

Table 2. Number of the ethnobotanical studies conducted in Turkey according province.

PROVINCE	ITEM	PROVINCE	ITEM	PROVINCE	ITEM	PROVINCE	ITEM
Adana	8	Bursa	10	İzmir	14	Niğde	1
Adıyaman	2	Çanakkale	3	Kahramanmaraş	7	Ordu	5
Afyon	13	Çankırı	0	Karabük	3	Osmaniye	1
Ağrı	8	Çorum	4	Karaman	2	Rize	3
Aksaray	3	Denizli	6	Kars	5	Sakarya	0
Amasya	6	Diyarbakır	13	Kastamonu	14	Samsun	5
Ankara	12	Edirne	3	Kayseri	10	Siirt	1
Antalya	11	Elazığ	7	Kırıkkale	0	Sinop	17
Ardahan	4	Erzincan	7	Kırklareli	1	Sivas	52
Artvin	9	Erzurum	23	Kırşehir	1	Şanlıurfa	10
Aydın	4	Eskişehir	4	Kilis	2	Şırnak	0
Balıkesir	20	Gaziantep	18	Kocaeli	7	Tekirdağ	4
Bartın	4	Giresun	7	Konya	26	Tokat	8
Batman	0	Gümüşhane	1	Kütahya	2	Trabzon	22
Bayburt	3	Hakkari	1	Malatya	11	Tunceli	5
Bilecik	5	Hatay	6	Manisa	14	Uşak	4
Bingöl	1	Iğdır	1	Mardin	0	Van	11
Bitlis	2	Isparta	14	Muğla	10	Yalova	3
Bolu	1	İçel	24	Muş	1	Yozgat	4
Burdur	1	İstanbul	35	Nevşehir	0	Zonguldak	0

Table 3 shows the number of studies according to traditional use of the plant. It reveals that the most common usages of plants were as remedies, foodstuffs and for divination.

Table: 3. Number of the ethnobotanical studies conducted in Turkey according to use of the plant.

AIM	ITEM	AIM	ITEM	AIM	ITEM
Remedies	466	Matting/mattresses	28	Wedding ceremonies	11
Food	227	Gum and adhesive	26	Building materials	8
Divination	170	Fuel	25	Fishing equipment	7
Amulet	125	Insecticide/Repellent	21	Musical instruments	6
Used as subject of poems, songs and tales	102	Cleansers, soap substitutes, brushes, brooms	20	Furniture	6
Birth ceremonies	70	Narcotic	17	Cigarette holders	5
Dyestuffs	67	Toys/games	17	Dental materials	5
Veterinary medicines	53	Burial	14	Utensils	5
Fodder	36	Cosmetics	14	Walking sticks	5
Ornamentals	29	Pot plant holders	11	Agricultural implements	3
Ritual/religion/magic	29	Rope	11	Miscellaneous	37

While evaluating the publications we came across several inadequacies in reporting and suggest therefore that future publications:

1. provide vernacular names with their scientific equivalences,
2. provide the name of the herbarium where the voucher specimens are kept,
3. specify which part of the plant is used and detailed descriptions of this use,
4. provide information about the reference person,
5. have a title which reflects its content and have at least the key word "ethnobotany".

It is obvious that the Turkish ethnobotanical studies will be more comprehensive in the future with the cooperation of the group of researchers who are specialized in botany, pharmacognosy, pharmacology, ethnology, and archaeology.

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