

TABLE 2. List of non-medicinal, non-food plants and their uses. Information obtained for Cuerici Reserve, Costa Rica.

Family (and genus, species where known)	Common Names	Habitat	Uses	Parts Used	Method of Use
Araceae (Anthurium)		Understory	Used to cook meat.	Leaf	Wrap meat in leaf. Dig a hole, place wrapped meat in hole, cover with a layer of soil. Build a fire on top.
Betulaceae (Alnus acuminata)	Alder	Forest	Construction, timber, tanning, wood protectant, matchsticks, shoe forms	Trunk, limbs, bark	As a wood conditioner, boil bark in water and apply liquid to wood. Wood carved to make shoe forms.
Hydrophyllaceae	Ortiga gigante	Edge / understory	Used to make thatch roofs.	Leaves	Leaves are overlapped to create a thatched roof.
	Canoa	Understory	Used to transport water.	Trunk	Trunk can be easily hollowed and used as a pipe to transport water.
	Jaboncillo	Edge / open spaces	Used to wash clothes.	Leaves	Crush leaves and wrap in cloth. Scrunch in water to develop suds.

Firstly, my information comes from only one source. Talking to more people would increase the quantity of information gleaned. It is a matter of urgency to actively seek out as much information from as many sources as possible. Carlos Solano believed that much of his information stemmed from indigenous traditions. However, he did not know many of the details or the extent of indigenous use. It is likely that, because of their greater reliance on the land for medicine, indigenous peoples could have possessed a more comprehensive encyclopedia of plants. However, whether such information is still available from indigenous informants is unclear.

It is evident that useful plants are found in both disturbed and primary forest, but the full spectrum of useful plants is available only when both primary forest and

disturbed areas are available to people. The area I sampled is unique in that it is situated in and near the Cuerici Reserve. However, for most inhabitants of high elevation areas, access is limited to secondary forest or no forest at all. Thus, it is critical that the remaining primary forest is conserved, and a more balanced land-use practice is developed.

Additionally, the market demand for natural treatments is growing, raising the dollar value of medicinal plants. Thus, the value of preserving these plants and their habitats increases. This helps in assigning a financial value to ecological communities, which can aid in conservation. Furthermore, only a small fraction of the plants with possible medicinal value have been tested. Thus, a great potential to discover novel therapies exists.

