



# CORDILLERA RESEARCH BRIEFS

Research Dialogues Series 1998-1999

Session No. 2

September 1998 No. 1



## Ethnobotany of Tabaan Norte, Tuba, Benguet

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The *pasagad* made from the *boyokan* hardwood found in Tabaan Norte, Tuba

**A** research on ethnobotany was conducted in Barangay Tabaan Norte in Tuba, Benguet during school year 1997-1998. Ethnobotany is defined by the author as “the study of how a particular culture and region makes use of indigenous plants.”

The study's main objective was to document the traditional knowledge of plant use of the residents of Tabaan and their indigenous ways of classifying plants. It also aimed to contribute to the documentation of indigenous knowledge in the Cordillera and to the growing knowledge on traditional medicine.

After the study, the researcher contributed to the herbarium collection of Philippine flora so as to encourage new research initiatives and application geared towards sustainable

development; i.e., conservation and preservation of useful flora and the utilization of useful plants.

The study site is located in the western part of the municipality. It is predominantly peopled by Ibaloy whose main agricultural activity is farming. Agricultural produce are brought to the Baguio City market.

Plant collection involved the gathering of herbarium specimens with complete parts that included flowers and, whenever available, fruits. Meanwhile, sterile specimens of plants that the Tabaan people used were collected and brought to the laboratory for processing. Replicates were made for distribution to the different herbaria in the Philippines. Some of the plants were, likewise, photographed for records purposes.



An ocular inspection of the site showed that the vegetation in Tabaan Norte is generally different compared to pine forest formations seen in Baguio City and nearby places. The trees are broad-leaved, and most of these belong to family *Moraceae*. Specific mention was made of the *samak* tree, particularly its blossoms which are used by the people to ferment *basi*, a local wine. Shrubs grow in abundance in the area and some of the undershrubs have been identified to represent liana and other grasses. Liana belongs to the *Passifloraceae* family and these “hang beautifully on trees and other plants.” Fern species not commonly seen in other places, likewise, abound in the area.



The *buybuy*, a perennial grass whose inflorescence and stalk are used in making brooms

The ethnobotanical data collected around Tabaan Norte were classified into several categories, namely food and spices, medicinal plants, for construction, for livelihood projects, for treatment of snakebites and dogbites, and ornamental plants. Certain plants were, likewise, identified as ritual plants and as amulets and for driving away evil spirits. Not included in the study were plants found in the forests of Tabaan Norte.

A total of 15 different plants were collected and catalogued. The research generated the local names of the plants and gave a brief description of each and their local uses. In terms of botanical description, the scientific names and the family to which each species is classified were also identified.

Prepared by: Alice G. Follosco



This special folio of **CORDILLERA RESEARCH BRIEFS** carries an abstract of the research paper that forms part of the **Research Dialogues Series** of 1998-1999. It is published by the Cordillera Studies Center to disseminate its research results to a wider audience.

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