

A SURVEY OF THE OCCURRENCE AND ECONOMIC USES
OF LEGUMINOUS SPECIES IN THE
NORTH-WESTERN PROVINCE OF SRI LANKA

S A Kulasooriya
*Dept. of Botany, University of Peradeniya,
and Institute of Fundamental Studies, Hantana, Kandy*

S A S Pathmasiri
Institute of Fundamental Studies, Hantana, Kandy

A survey of the occurrence and economic uses of Leguminous Species in the North Western Province of Sri Lanka was undertaken to update the status of this valuable plant group. Information was gathered by interviewing people and collecting information to fill a detailed questionnaire designed to obtain maximum knowledge of the occurrence and uses of the legumes.

Eighty five species of legumes were recorded in the study region during the survey, which included the well-utilized, under-utilized, non-utilized and even some harmful species. Only ten species were found to be cultivated popularly as pulse crops or vegetables. Fifty five species were recorded as medicinally useful plants. Use of legume tree species as firewood mainly for brick and tile industries, and as valuable timber trees were also well recorded.

Despite the well known nodule formation and nitrogen fixing ability of the leguminous species, large scale agriculture in the region seldom used legumes as cover-crops, green manure and as compost ingredients. Owing to the abundance of graminaceous fodder, legumes were rarely used as feed for animals, as well. Although the family is known for its chemically useful substances, such as gums, tannins, dyes and stains no incidence of such use was recorded during the survey.

Many under-utilized leguminous plants available in this region, can be promoted as economically utilizable in crops in the future.