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Catharanthus roseus and Adhatoda vasica are two common commercially important plants in Sri Lanka.

The alkaloids of Catharanthus roseus were extracted with dilute acetic acid, defatted and extracted with chloroform in the acid and basic media to obtain the total alkaloid.

The ajmalicine content was estimated by t.l.c. - densitometric technique. The plates were scanned at  $\lambda$  280 nm and results compared with those of t.l.c. - UV - spectrometric method.

These studies were employed to determine<sup>1</sup> the growth pattern of the plant, optimum period to harvest, and effects of fertilizer on alkaloid content.

The alkaloids of A. vasica were extracted with ethanol, concentrated, acidified, filtered, basified and extracted with amyl alcohol. The vasicine content was estimated by a new rapid densitometric technique. The alkaloids separated on t.l.c. plates were scanned at  $\lambda$  298 nm. This method is applicable over a range of 2 $\mu$ g to 12.5 $\mu$ g/spot and the standard deviation is 0.55. The results were compared with those of the t.l.c. - UV method. This technique is used in determining<sup>2</sup> the seasonal and geographical variation of vasicine in plants. The application in the analysis of commercial preparations will be described.

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#### References

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2. Ratnayake, C.K. et al (1986) Proc. Institute of Chemistry p 19.