Derleme - Review

Mythos and Opportunities of Usage in Landscape Architecture of Some Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Naturally Growing in Turkey*

Türkiye'de Doğal Olarak Yetişen Bazı Tıbbi ve Aromatik Bitkilerin Mitosları ve Peyzaj Mimarlığında Kullanım Olanakları

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ABSTRACT

Humankind has witnessed various natural events since ancient times. Myths have been the best reflector of this situation. The plants that are given to humans as a gift by the gods, have an important place in mythology. People used plants for various purposes such as food, warming, defense, tapping their feelings, and most importantly finding healing in the history. As the ages progressed, with the development of medical science, the importance of medicinal and aromatic plants used for the purpose of healing has also increased and it has become a big market that deals with various professions. Our country has three different floristic regions, various geographical features and climate varieties. So it has a very important potential about medicinal and aromatic plants. In this study; it was given that some information about usage of the medical and aromatic plants, naturally growing in Turkey, and their myths. It was mentioned that their importance at different cultures and opportunities of usage in landscape architecture works. As a result, it is emphasized that the usage of natural plant species at landscape architectural application works and the importance of medicinal and aromatic plants at plant design works.

Keywords: Medicinal and aromatic plants, landscape architecture, plant design, plant mythos

ÖZ

Eski çağlardan beri insanlar çeşitli doğa olaylarına tanık olmuşlardır. Bu durumun en iyi yansıtıcısı mitoslar olmuştur. Tanrıların insana verdiği bir armağan olarak ele alınan bitkiler, mitolojide önemli bir yere sahiptir. Tarih boyunca insanlar bitkileri; besin, ısınma, savunma, hissettiği duyguları dışa vurma ve en önemlisi şifa bulma gibi çeşitli amaçlarla kullanmışlardır. Çağlar ilerledikçe, tıp biliminin de gelişmesiyle birlikte, şifa bulma amacı ile kullanılan tıbbi ve aromatik bitkilerin önemi de giderek artmış ve çeşitli meslek dallarını ilgilendiren büyük bir pazar haline gelmiştir. Ülkemiz üç farklı filoristik bölge, değişik coğrafi özellikler ve iklim çeşitliliğine sahiptir. Bu nedenle tıbbi ve aromatik bitkiler konusunda oldukça önemli bir potansiyele sahiptir. Bu çalışmada; Türkiye'de doğal olarak yetişen bazı tıbbi ve aromatik bitkilerin geçmişten günümüze kullanımları ve mitosları hakkında bilgi verilmiştir. Çeşitli kültürlerde taşıdıkları önem ve peyzaj mimarlığı çalışmalarında kullanım olanakları aktarılmıştır. Sonuç olarak peyzaj mimarlığı uygulama çalışmalarında doğal bitki türlerinin kullanımı ile tıbbi ve aromatik bitkilerin bitkisel tasarım çalışmalarındaki önemi vurgulanmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Tıbbi ve aromatik bitkiler, peyzaj mimarlığı, bitkisel tasarım, bitki mitosları

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INTRODUCTION

Both urban population and the rate of construction increases. With the increase of the structures, the importance of open and green spaces in urban areas is increasing day by day. The plant material to be used in open green areas should be selected from natural plant species that will best suit environmental conditions. This is the most important factor of the success of the application and ensuring sustainability. Another benefit of choosing natural plant species is economic benefit. As species that can not adapt to environmental conditions disappear or can not demonstrate the desired improvement, the placement of new species in places is a major factor in increasing maintenance costs. Our country has a diversity of flora thanks to having three different floristic regions, different geographical features and different climate varieties. The number of plant taxon in our country is approximately 12.000. About 1.000 of these species have medicinal and aromatic properties. Furthermore, while the number of endemic plant species in the continental flora of Europe was around 2.750, approximately 3.700 of the species in our country are endemic.[1,2]

Our country has a very important potential for medical and aromatic plants thanks to its floristic richness. While "medicinal plants" are used as pharmaceutical raw materials, "aromatic plants" are used in a wide variety of food materials due to their scent and taste characteristics. The plants that have both odor and taste characteristics and are used as pharmaceutical raw materials are called "medical and aromatic plants". These plants are used as ornamental plants in plant design studies because they are decorative as well as spice, food, herb tea use and therapeutic properties.[3,4]

The myths term means a public story spreading traditionally or the story which was changed by the imagination of society.[5] Plants are considered to be the most valuable gift of the gods to humans in mythology. With the help of mythos it is possible to determine the past daily use of medicinal and aromatic plants and their importance in various cultures.[6] In this direction, the myths of some medicinal and aromatic plants that grow naturally in Turkey and the knowledge of which cultures used them for which purposes will increase the interest in plants.

Medicinal and aromatic plants have a very important place in the aesthetic and functional aspects of plant design works with leaf forms, different colors and flowers and fruits in different colors and textures. Medicinal and aromatic plants have a wide range of use in collection gardens, healing gardens, therapeutic gardens, botanical gardens, rock gardens, flower beds, roof gardens, sloping land and highways with their functional and aesthetic features.[4]

Conveying of the myths of some naturally grown medicinal and aromatic plants in Turkey and their possibilities of usage in landscape architecture and emphasizing on the use of natural plant species in landscape design works are the aims of this study. It is also aimed to encourage the production of naturally grown medicinal and aromatic plant species in our country.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research material is composed of some medicinal and aromatic plants naturally grown in Turkey. Especially species that spread in the Marmara, Aegean, Mediterranean and Black Sea regions were selected. In choosing these species it has been taken into consideration that plants have an important place in the mythology, as well as fruit, flower, leaf and branches reflecting different color, texture and form characteristics and their aesthetic and functioning in planting design works. In this context, the myths of some medicinal and aromatic plants that grow naturally in Turkey and the knowledge of which cultures used them for which purposes were investigated. In addition, their usage areas in landscape architecture were examined.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following findings were obtained about the mythos of some naturally grown medicinal and aromatic plants in Turkey and their possibilities of usage in landscape architecture.

***Crocus ancyrensis* (Herb.) Maw (Ankara crocus/Ankara Çiğdemi):** The Hittites gave the name of "Crocus" to their festival that was called "Antahsum" which was held in February-March and lasted for 38 days.[1] Crocus (Krokos), a close friend of god Hermes in Greek mythology, was defeated in a power race and lost his life from blood loss. The flowers that grow in the soil, where his blood had leaked, are given his name (Crocus).[6,7]

Crocus ancyrensis (Herb.) Maw, used in "crocus rice", is used as an ornamental plant in parks and gardens with flashy yellow flowers opening between February-March (Figure 1).[1] It is an endemic species and it spreads in Western and Central Black Sea, Mediterranean and Central Anatolia regions.[8]

Figure 1. Flowers of *Crocus ancyrensis* (Herb.)[9]

***Cupressus sempervirens* L. (Cypress/Servi):** The Phoenicians, one of the oldest tribes of the Mediterranean tradition, used cypress especially for shipbuilding. In Rome, cypress wood is a very precious and expensive commodity, and it has been a great effort to grow it. The villagers were planting cypress as dowry for the girls. In Istanbul, in the time of Byzantines, The Bebek district was in the form of a cypress forest and there was a place of oblation of Artemis who is the guardian of the hunters.[10] It is believed that the cypress tree, which is symbolic of death and mourning in the West, preserves the body, whereas in the East it is a symbol of endurance and immortality.[6,11]

Essential oil obtained from young branches of cypress, oleum cupressi, have antiseptic and antispasmodic effects and it is sprayed on the rooms, clothes and clothes of the patients who suffer from whooping-cough.[10]

It is a tree with a column or pyramidal form and it grows till 25-30 m (Figure 2). The form reflects the respect and peace of mind to the people. Cypress is a species which commonly used in coastal towns, villages, tombs and cemeteries with its beautiful smell.[10] It spreads in the South of Marmara, Aegean and Mediterranean regions in our country.[8]

Figure 2. *Cupressus sempervirens* L.[12]

***Cydonia oblonga* Mill. (Quince/Ayva):** According to the belief in the Greek mythology, young Akontios falls in love with a girl named Kydippe. During the sacrificial ceremonies at the Temple of Artemis, Akontios writes "I swear on the temple of Artemis to marry with Akontios" on the quince that he carries in his pocket and throws it towards Kydippe. Kydippe reads it aloud with absent-mindedness. She unwittingly gives swear of loyalty in Temple of Artemis. When Kydippe's father learns of this, he realizes that he can not marry his daughter to anyone else, and the young lovers reach their goal.[6,13]

Quince leaves are infused and it is used for cough and stomach pain.[14]

Cydonia oblonga Mill., which can be grown up to 4-6 meters, is a decorative species with flashy flowers and fruits as well as leaves changing color in autumn and it is very suitable for small places (Figure 3).[10] It spreads in the South of Marmara, Western and Central Black Sea and Mediterranean regions in our country.[8]

Figure 3. The general appearance of *Cydonia oblonga* Mill.

***Elaeagnus angustifolia* L. (Russian olive/İğde):** According to the belief in Islamic mythology, Nemrut wants a great fire to be made to punish Abraham who has broken his idols. Russian olive trees have been used to burn this fire and the god transforms the place Abraham falls to the garden and save him. However, after that day the Russian olive trees are cursed and their smooth body is covered with thorns and their burning power is weak.[6,15]

The fruits of *Elaeagnus angustifolia* L. are infused and it is used for kidney stones in folk medicine.[16]

Elaeagnus angustifolia L. grows in all regions except Southeast Anatolia in Turkey.[8] Russian olive can be used for planting dunes and forming fence texture in landscape architecture works (Figure 4).[17]

Figure 4. The general appearance of *Elaeagnus angustifolia* L.[18]

***Laurus nobilis* L. (Daphne/Defne):** According to the belief in the Greek mythology, Apollo was a masterful arrow shooter. Eros had sent an impossible love to the heart of Apollon, who saw Eros in the course of shooting arrows and made fun of him. Apollon fell in love with Daphne, the daughter of the river god Peneios. Daphne, however, escaped to the mountain, unwilling to be with Apollo. Daphne, who finally realized that he was going to be captured by Apollo, wanted from Peneios to turn himself into something else. The god of river, Paneios, transforms her daughter into a daphne. From now on daphne is dedicated to Apollon who can not find his love.[6,13]

This plant species is evergreen and it grows 4-12 m. *Laurus nobilis* L. spreads in the South of Marmara, Black Sea and Mediterranean regions.[8] Oleum lauri (daphne oil) which obtained from its fruits is applied to rheumatism pain. Fragrant daphne leaves are the richest organ of the plant in terms of essential oils. It is used in daphne oil production and to give flavor to some foods.[1]

It is suitable to use for fence formation. It can also be used to create decorative appearance in parks and gardens (Figure 5). Besides, it is involved in maquis formation.[19]

Figure 5. The general appearance of *Laurus nobilis* L.[20]

Liquidambar orientalis **Mill.(Sweetgum/Günlük Ağacı-Anadolu Sığla Ağacı):** The name comes from the combination of Arabic "amber" which means "pleasant smell" and Latin "liquids" which means "fluent". When Phoenix, symbolizing the second life and reincarnation in Greek mythology, about to die it began to sum up the branches of the sweetgum and reborn from the ashes of burned branches after it died.[6,13] According to another belief, the Ancient Egyptians used the fragrant shallow oil balm obtained from the secretion of this tree in the mummification process. Nowadays, this oil balm is used for asthma, bronchitis and lung diseases in folk medicine.[21]

Liquidambar orientalis Mill. spreads in Aegean and Mediterranean regions in our country and it grows 20-25 m (Figure 6). Sweetgum is a deciduous tree and it is used to create shadow areas in parks and gardens and also it can be used on road sides.[17]

Figure 6. The general appearance of *Liquidambar orientalis* Mill.

Morus alba **L. (White Mulberry/Ak Dut):** Thisbe and Pyramos, who fall in love with each other, are promised to meet at the edge of a source. Before this meeting, Pyramos waits in the shadow of the white mulberry tree on the side of this source. At that moment a lion in his mouth is approaching there and Thisbe runs away. Pyramos thinks that the lion has eaten Thisbe while seeing Thisbe's scarf in the mouth of the lion. And Pyramos commits suicide. And then Thisbe suicides when he sees Pyramos dead. It is believed

that the white berries of the white mulberry tree turn red with the blood of the two lovers and that black mulberry tree comes out.[6,13]

The fruit of the white mulberry is boiled in water and it is used for oral candidiasis (for babies).[14]

Morus alba L., a tree that can be grown up to 10-15 meters, is suitable to be used as a shadow tree in the sitting areas and pedestrian paths (Figure 7).[10] It spreads in all over Turkey.[8]

Figure 7. The general appearance of *Morus alba* L.[22]

***Myrtus communis* L. (Myrtle/Mersin):** In Greek mythology, myrtle was associated with the goddess Aphrodite. It was also a tradition for those who participated in the Dionysos rituals to wear crowns adorned with myrtle leaves. Because Dionysos left her favorite plant, myrtle, to save his mother, Semele, from Hades.[6,13]

The leaves of *Myrtus communis* L. are infused and it can be used for the treatment of diarrhea.[23]

Myrtus communis L., a shrub that can be grown up to 2-3 meters, can be used as a fence plant in landscape architecture works (Figure 8). It spreads in the South of Marmara, Black Sea, Aegean and Mediterranean regions.[8]

Figure 8. The general appearance of *Myrtus communis* L.[24]

***Ocimum basilicum* L. (Basil/Fesleğen):** Basil, in ancient Greek culture, is known as the symbol of misfortune and unluckiness while it is believed that basil bring good luck and protected it from evil in Indian culture.[6-7] Krişna who is one of the Vishnu's avatars, symbolizing the rebirth in Indian belief, fell in love with a mortal girl named Tulasi and it is believed that god transformed him into a basil to immortalize the girl he loved. In Christian belief, basil is a miraculous plant that grows where believers bury the holy cross.[6,25]

Basil leaves, which are also used to flavor foods, are infused and it is used for stomachache.[26] Basil, which grows up to 50 cm. (Figure 9), is a fragrant plant species besides these medicinal features. It spreads in Marmara, Aegean and Mediterranean regions in our country.[8] This plant species can be used in flowerpots and plant boxes at indoor planting design works. And also it can be used in outdoor plating design works which will be done at courtyard gardens, windows and balconies.[4]

Figure 9. The general appearance of *Ocimum basilicum* L.[27]

***Papaver rhoeas* L.(Corn Poppy/Gelincik):** In Greek Mythology, the corn poppy plant was associated with Demeter, who was regarded as the goddess of the crops because he grew up on cultivated soil. One day, Demeter's daughter, Persephone, has been kidnapped by the god of underworld, Hades, when collecting flowers in the prairie. Due to Demeter's saturninity the soil dried up and became inefficient. It is believed that when Persephone has been kidnapped she was collecting corn poppy. It is also thought that the color of corn poppy symbolized the resurrection after death. Because Persephone who entered underworld and then went out again on the earth.[6,28]

Corn poppy is herbaceous and it grows 50-60 cm. This plant spreads in Marmara, Black Sea, Mediterranean and Eastern Anatolia regions.[8] The young fruits of *Papaver rhoeas* L. are decoction and it is used for cough.[16] This plant species can be used in parterres, plant boxes and rock gardens in landscape architecture works (Figure 10).

Figure 10. The flower of *Papaver rhoeas* L.[29]

***Rosa canina* L. (Rose Hip/Kuşburnu):** Lokros, known as the king of the Lelegler, falls into disagreement with his son. He decides to go out with his supporters to set up a new country. Before leaving, he consults a soothsayer about the place of the new country. The soothsayer tells him that a forest dog will bite him and he should settle down where he had been bitten. Lacrosse, who goes a long way, mistakenly hits a rose hip thorn when he comes to the western slopes of Parnassus and can not walk for days. He remembers the dog bite that the soothsayer mentions, and understands that this is the place to build the country. In Greek, rose hip are called "dog thorn".[6,13]

Rose hip is a thorny shrub that grows till 3-4 m (Figure 11). It grows naturally in many parts of Turkey, on the edges of forests and fields, in open areas, wetlands or arid regions. It has a decorative appearance with pink and fragrant flowers which blooms during the summer months. The fruits in red color are edible and usually boiled and drunk as tea.[19] The fruits which contains high incidence of vitamin C can be used as a remedy for colds.[3]

It is suitable for use especially in rural landscape, road slopes and refuges. In this direction, it can be used as an erosion preventive plant in areas where erosion is dangerous in our country.[3]

Figure 11. The general appearance of *Rosa canina* L.[30]

***Rosmarinus officinalis* L. (Rosemary/Biberiye):** The name comes from the word "rosmarinus" which means "raw drip of the sea" in Latin. Rosemary, believed to have strengthened memory, was a symbol of faithfulness in ancient Greek and Rome. In Shakespeare's famous novel Hamlet, Ophelia hold out the olive branch to Hamlet and she says, "Here is rosemary, not to be forgotten". In ancient Greek, the students put on their heads the crown which made of the leaves rosemary or carried them in their necks to keep their mind alive.[6,7]

Today, rosemary's flowers and leaves infused and it is used for cold.[16] Besides its medicinal properties, it has fragrant leaves. It is in the form of evergreen shrub and it grows 1-2 m (Figure 12). This plant species is affected by its leaves and flowers which bloom in March-April. It can be used solitary or in groups in roof and terrace gardens as well as in parterre and plant boxes. It is suitable to use for fence formation.[4] It can also be used on dry, rocky and sandy slopes.[17] It spreads in Aegean and Mediterranean regions in our country.[8]

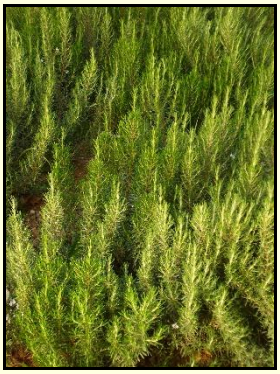

Figure 12. The general appearance of *Rosmarinus officinalis* L.

***Salvia fruticosa* Mill. (Sage/Adaçayı):** The word "sage" comes from the word "salvare" which means "to save" in Latin. This plant, which represents immortality, wisdom and protection, has influenced many cultures. In the Arab world, while the sage growers are not believed to die, in Christianity the sage is one of the symbols of the Virgin Mary. It is also known that the Romans regarded the sage as sacred and that the sage collection was performed in a special ceremony, while in the middle ages the sage was a drug used against febrile illnesses.[6,7,11]

Sage, which is widespread especially in Aegean and Mediterranean coasts in our country, grows in limestone cliffs and damp environments.[31]

Sage's leaves are infused and it is used for abdominal pain.[14]

Besides its medicinal properties, it also has aromatic properties with bluish-purple flowers. The fragrant flowers that bloom in June - July stimulate the smell and sight senses. Also it can be used solitary or in groups in roof and terrace gardens as well as in flower beds and plant boxes for functional and aesthetic purposes in planting design works (Figure 13).[4]

Figure 13. The flowering period of *Salvia fruticosa* Mill.[32]

***Viola odorata* L. (Violet/Kokulu Menekşe):** Attis, which means "handsome" in Greek mythology, is liked by hermaphrodit Agdistis and Kybele. Besides, the king of Pessinous, Midas, wanted to marry Attis to his daughter. But Agdistis enraged Attis and Attis had committed suicide under a pine tree. In addition, Midas's daughter, who took the news, also committed suicide. It is believed that violets had appeared in the soil where both the blood of Attis and the daughter of Midas had leaked. Besides, in Rome's mythology, Violaria, a festival organized to please of the Man, known as the spirits of the dead, violets was left on the tombs to try to please Man's souls.[6,7]

Violet's upper part of the soil is especially effective as an emollient against inflammation, externally cough and throat inflammation. In addition to these medicinal properties, the essence obtained from the fragrant flowers of the plant is used in perfumes.[33-36]

Viola odorata L. is grown almost in all regions.[8] Violet grows 10-15 cm. and it can be used in groups in seasonal flower parterres with fragrant and aesthetically effective flowers (Figure 14).

Figure 14. The flowering period of *Viola odorata* L.[37]

***Vitis vinifera* L. (Vine/Asma):** There are many beliefs about vine. One of them begins when a goat separates from Hz. Noah's ship to find food. Hz. Noah observes that the goat moves strangely when he returns. Hz. Noah follows the goat the next day and sees that the goat eats from the fruit of vine. The devil sees that Noah eats from the vine fruit and enjoys and the devil dries the vines. But then the devil regrets doing this and tries to green the vine again. At the end of this, the vine begins to fruit a year later.[6,38] Vine leaves are used as wound healers.[39]

In Turkey, it is grown almost in all regions especially Aegean and Thrace regions. Vine's fruit can be consumed fresh or dried. Pekmez, vinegar, wine and raki which obtained from the water of vine have commercial value.[19]

Vine covers wooden, plastic and steel constructions and it take on a task of shading, bordering and screening in landscape architecture works (Figure 15).[40]

Figure 15. The leaves of *Vitis vinifera* L.[41]

CONCLUSION

Our country has a very important potential for medicinal and aromatic plants thanks to its flouristic richness. These plants are used as ornamental plants with color and form of leaves, flowers and fruits in plant design studies because they are decorative as well as spice, food, herb tea use and therapeutic properties. Medicinal and aromatic plants have a wide range of use in collection gardens, healing gardens,

therapeutic gardens, botanical gardens, rock gardens, flower beds, roof gardens, sloping land and highways with their functional and aesthetic features. In addition, the myths of some medicinal and aromatic plants that grow naturally in Turkey and the knowledge of which cultures used them for which purposes will increase the interest in plants.

It is one of the most important factors that natural plant species, which adapt optimum on environment conditions of application area, are used for open green spaces in order to being successful and ensuring sustainability. Another benefit of choosing natural plant species is economic benefit. In this context, research on the definition, use, protection and reproduction of naturally grown medicinal and aromatic plants in Turkey should be encouraged and it will be prevented from being economically dependent on the outside.

It is extremely important to establish gene centers such as botanical gardens and medicinal plant gardens in order to give importance to the cultivation of medicinal and aromatic plant species which are particularly threatened in Turkey as well as in developed countries. In this regard, scientific studies and researches on medicinal and aromatic plants will be supported.

DİSCLOSURE

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