

## Chimpanzees use medicinal plants when sick

24th June 2024



Humans have been using medicinal plants since prehistoric times. They are still used around the world in traditional medicine. For the first time, scientists have discovered that chimpanzees also seek out the fruits of the forest to heal themselves

when sick. Researchers from Oxford University in the UK conducted a study of chimpanzee behaviour at the Budongo Central Forest Reserve in Uganda. The researchers tracked a male chimp with an injured hand looking for the leaves of a fern. The fern had properties that may have reduced the swelling in the ape's hand. Another chimpanzee with a parasitic infection sought out the bark of a cat-thorn tree. This may have helped to alleviate the animal's condition.

The research team said there was a strong correlation between the chimpanzees' ailments and injuries and the healing properties in the flora they consumed. The researchers tested plant extracts that were not a normal part of a chimpanzee's diet. They found that 88 per cent of the extracts contained anti-bacterial properties, while 33 per cent of them had anti-inflammatory qualities. Researcher and anthropologist Dr Elodie Freymann said: "Pharmacological results suggest that Budongo chimpanzees consume several species with potent medicinal properties." She said her team's investigations into the primates' behaviour may pave the way for a greater use of natural remedies in our lives.

Sources: yahoo.com / ndtv.com / newscientist.com

## Writing

Natural medicines are better for us than manufactured ones. Discuss.

## Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

humans / medicinal plants / traditional / chimpanzees / sick / behaviour / fern / bark / ailments / injuries / flora / plant extracts / anti-bacterial / diet / primates / our lives

## True / False

- 1) Humans have used plants as medicine for about 700 years. T / F
- 2) Chimpanzees started using plants for medicinal purposes this year. T / F
- 3) Researchers observed a chimpanzee with an injury to its hand. T / F
- 4) A chimpanzee with an infection ate the bark of a cat-thorn bush. T / F
- 5) Researchers said the link between the chimps' ills and plants was weak. T / F
- 6) Nearly 90% of the plants chimpanzees ate were anti-bacterial. T / F
- 7) A third of the plants chimpanzees ate were anti-inflammatory. T / F
- 8) Humans may use plants for natural remedies more in the future. T / F

## Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                         |                 |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. <b>medicinal</b>     | a. ate          |
| 2. <b>traditional</b>   | b. reduce       |
| 3. <b>heal</b>          | c. monitored    |
| 4. <b>tracked</b>       | d. conventional |
| 5. <b>alleviate</b>     | e. link         |
| 6. <b>correlation</b>   | f. powerful     |
| 7. <b>consumed</b>      | g. curative     |
| 8. <b>properties</b>    | h. prepare      |
| 9. <b>potent</b>        | i. qualities    |
| 10. <b>pave the way</b> | j. cure         |

## Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you know about medicinal plants?
- b) Which are better – medicinal plants or manufactured drugs?
- c) How intelligent are chimpanzees?
- d) What plants do you know of with healing properties?
- e) What do you do when part of your body is swollen?
- f) What do you know about ferns?
- g) Would you like to study chimpanzee behaviour?
- h) How much do you rely on medicine?

## Phrase Match

- |  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| 1. Humans have been using medicinal plants       | a. in the ape's hand       |
| 2. seek out the fruits of the forest             | b. species                 |
| 3. properties that may have reduced the swelling | c. of a cat-thorn tree     |
| 4. Another chimpanzee with                       | d. bacterial properties    |
| 5. sought out the bark                           | e. to heal themselves      |
| 6. The research team said there was a strong     | f. since prehistoric times |
| 7. plant   | g. way for a greater use   |
| 8. the extracts contained anti-                  | h. extracts                |
| 9. chimpanzees consume several                   | i. a parasitic infection   |
| 10. pave the                                     | j. correlation             |

## Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- What do you know about chimpanzees?
- Is any of the food we eat medicinal?
- What can we learn from chimpanzees?
- How important is the work of anthropologists?
- What will medicine of the future be like?
- Do you think nature contains remedies to all our ills?
- What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

## Spelling

- since rhitspoeirc times
- raitoitndal medicine
- The fern had roeptrpies
- reduced the esllwing in the ape's hand
- Another chimpanzee with a rsaaiptic infection
- helped to vleialte the animal's condition
- there was a strong rlreacitoon
- the chimpanzees' ilmenats
- The researchers tested plant tearxcts
- anti-fiamamntlroy qualities
- Researcher and trnlophagooist
- natural edemires

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. d	3. j	4. c	5. b
6. e	7. a	8. i	9. f	10. h

## Role Play

### Role A – Garlic

You think garlic is the plant that's best for us. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their plants aren't so good. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): spinach, dandelion or avocado.

### Role B – Spinach

You think spinach is the plant that's best for us. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their plants aren't so good. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): garlic, dandelion or avocado.

### Role C – Dandelion

You think dandelion is the plant that's best for us. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their plants aren't so good. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): spinach, garlic or avocado.

### Role D – Avocado

You think avocado is the plant that's best for us. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their plants aren't so good. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): spinach, dandelion or garlic.

## Speaking – Plants

Rank these with your partner. Put the plants that are best for us at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |            |             |
|------------|-------------|
| • Aloe     | • Ginseng   |
| • Garlic   | • Ginger    |
| • Lavender | • Dandelion |
| • Cactus   | • Spinach   |

### Answers – True False

1	F	2	F	3	T	4	F	5	F	6	T	7	T	8	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.