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# Process your own Misai Kucing tea at home

**KANGAR:** Are you confident that the Misai Kucing products available in the market are made up of 100 per cent dried Misai Kucing leaves? One cannot rule out the possibility that the leaves sold commercially are a mixture of leaves, stalk and stems.

And are you aware of the medicinal value of the herb especially the elements found in the leaves?

Books on local herbs praise the Misai Kucing, its botany name *Orthosiphon aristatus*, a local herb with many medicinal virtues. It is easily found at the fringes of jungles but now planted in commercial scale.

Misai Kucing, also known as Java Tea among Western researchers, is among the herbs that have been studied widely and many of its medicinal values have been established.

One of the important attribute of the extract from the herb is its diuretic effect that helps those with kidney problems, inflammation of the bladder and gout.

Studies have found that the Misai Kucing contains at least 30 complex chemical compound or phytochemicals to help relax the muscle walls of vessels thus improving the urine flow.

This diuretic effect is also useful in the treatment of many other medical conditions, thus the Misai Kucing extract is among the content in body slimming remedies and in detoxifying the body the Western way.

Apart from being useful in treating the urethra and bladder, the diuretic attribute also helps to prevent the formation of gallstones and controls high blood pressure.

Similar to the modern diuretic medications available in the tablet forms to

treat hypertension, the phytochemicals in Misai Kucing work by eliminating water and salt ions from the blood thus reducing the pressure on the heart.

In the treatment for diabetes, studies found that the Misai Kucing extract could help reduce the blood sugar significantly and it works similar to modern medication used in managing with diabetes.

Apart from that, studies also indicate the presence of numerous phytochemicals in the Misai Kucing that could cut down on cholesterol.

Scientists have found that the extract of the plant could retard the production of a specific enzyme that contributes to the production of bad cholesterol (LDL) that clogs the blood vessels close to heart.

Interestingly some studies have indicated, some of the phytochemicals in the Misai Kucing leaves could retard the skin tumor cells.

Thus drinking the Misai Kucing tea is certainly beneficial in preventing, treating and managing with numerous diseases associated with the modern society.

And what more, it is much cheaper than the conventional medication.

The 'Malaysian Herbal Heritage' recently published by the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM), recommended those with hypertension to soak two or three leaves in hot water and drink the tea.

To help reduce fever, edema, influenza, rheumatism and hepatitis, one should drink the water boiled with the leaves or the whole plant.

In treating diabetes, jaundice, gallstone, arteriosclerosis and weak heart, the Misai Kucing leaves are used

in combination with others.

As the Misai Kucing easily grows in a vase or the house compound, the homegrown leaves can be processed at home for daily use, thus one can be sure that the Misai Kucing leaves are clean and free from chemicals.

At the Perlis Herbal Forest, its keeper Hashim Saad is ever ready to share the know-how in processing Misai Kucing leaves.

At the park, the staff process the Misai Kucing leaves by hand.

First they go to the field to choose the matured Misai Kucing plants, the ones that have reached 16 inches (40.6 centimetres).

The plant is then washed with clean water before being dried in clean water and placed on a rack to dry. Then the leaves are separated from the stalk and the good stalks are soaked in the pail with some water. This is to allow new roots to grow from the stem so they could be replanted.

Meanwhile, the leaves are further dried under the sun until the colour changes to brown.

"Depending on the weather, the drying process takes about a week.

"It is then dried further in a cake oven for about 15 minutes before being cooled and pulverised using a dry grinder," explained Pak Hashim.

The end product is stored in airtight container and the dried leaves now can be used like tea leaves, infused in hot water to make the Misai Kucing tea.

"The Misai Kucing tea leaves that we process here is not for sale, it is served for free as a welcome drink for the guests coming to Perlis Herbal Park. "It is also bottled to be sold as souvenirs to special guests," he said. -- Bernama