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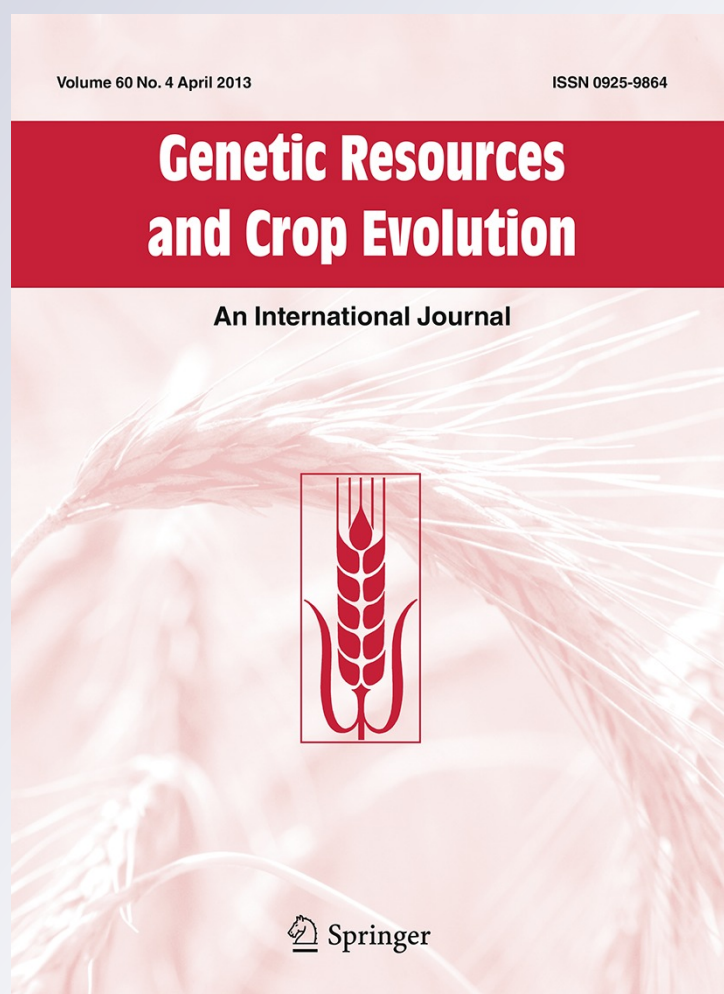
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An ethnobotanical study on home gardens in a Transylvanian Hungarian Csángó village (Romania)

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Abstract Due to their isolation and insufficiency of official medical care, the inhabitants of several Transylvanian “Csángó” farms in Romania have valuable archaic knowledge of plants. Such ethnobotanical data reported previously from different regions of the country are available only in Hungarian. Of the various ethnic groups constituting the Csángós’ culture the present study was undertaken to survey those living in the Úz-valley (Romania), focusing on the indigenous human ethnomedicine and ethnoveterinary practices of Csinód, a village in the Eastern Carpathian Mountains. The aim of the study was to summarize the occurrence and diversity of food, medicinal, ornamental and fodder plants, as well as herbal home

remedies applied on a daily basis. In the summers of 2007–2009 altogether 85 plant taxa in 13 home gardens were registered, using free interviews with local terminology, concentrating on drug parts, use, origin of knowledge and peculiar magico-mythological procedures associated with the species concerned. Due to the obvious decrease in the villagers’ traditional knowledge the prevention of these data from disappearing has gained primary importance in an effort to preserve this heritage as an integral part of the folk medicinal system in Transylvania.

Keywords Csinód · Food plants · Home garden · Medicinal plants · Ornamental plants

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Introduction

In several regions of the world traditional ethnobotanical health systems comprise special curative methods. Healers know and use plants, animals, human materials and minerals in their environment for various diseases, treating them with unique methods and terminology (Hoppál and Törő 1975). Some ethnobotanical surveys study the complete folk medicinal knowledge of the inhabitants in a particular region, while others focus on therapeutic methods for treating specific illnesses (Tagarelli et al. 2010). Some papers display the use of a single plant species (Keusgen et al. 2006; Busmann

et al. 2010), summarizing and detailing the human-plant and human-environment relationship. The heritage of traditional knowledge about indigenous healing systems is based on two types of transmission: in the vertical type the data are inherited from parent to child, as opposed to the horizontal transmission which appears among any individuals of the same generation (Johns 2000).

These transmission types have been documented also in the regions of Transylvania (currently part of Romania) where our ethnobotanical surveys have been conducted. Medicinal plants, used in the folk-therapy in Transylvania, play an important part in the everyday life of the inhabitants, especially in remote, very traditional areas. Transylvania abounds in botanical values; a number of plants have played an important role in treating various diseases with traditional healing methods for a long time. However, the archaic medical skills are likely to die out soon if the tendency of moving to cities and abroad continues among the young. Unfortunately, they leave behind their ancestral practices with plants, due to the change of lifestyle and culture, preferring mostly the modern phytotherapeutic methods, so the indigenous knowledge of medicinal plant use is continuously degrading.

There are, or more precisely there were the following main ethnic groups in Transylvania: the most compact group is that of the Romanians, the most scattered one is that of the Roma. The smallest is the Transylvanian Germans (Saxons disappeared practically in the last decades from North and South Transylvania, Romania), the Széklers *sensu lato* (a more than 1 million large Hungarian ethnic group populating the Eastern and Central part of Transylvania) and finally the formerly Hungarian, now mostly Romanian Csángós living mainly outside Transylvania, on the eastern slopes of the Carpathians and in the Eastern part of Romania (Moldova) (Pappné et al. 2002; Isohookana-Asunmaa 2012).

The first Transylvanian herbals with a huge amount of both local and European plant remedies date back to the 16th century (Lencsés 1577 cf. Szabó 2000; Melius 1578) and surely had an influence on the traditional Transylvanian ethnobotany. The first “linnean” (i.e. not “herbal-type”) publications about Transylvanian ethnobotanical knowledge from different regions of Hungarian Széklers and Csángós appeared in the 18th century (Benkő 1781, 1783), including the vernacular names and habitats of the

species, but lacking the description of their traditional use in folk medicine.

In the 20th century several ethnobotanical surveys were performed involving data collections and descriptions about the medicinal use of Transylvanian plant species with the vernacular and scientific names, the drug parts used and the application forms both in human and veterinary medicine. The first and most influential explorer of the Transylvanian medicinal plants was Béla Páter (1860–1938) (Farkas and Lázár 2010). Based on Páter's traditions, the first ethnomedicinal survey of the region of Harghita was published by Rácz and Holló (1968), reporting several data about the plants used in the folk human and veterinary medicine by the Széklers. The inhabitants of Bukovina, (Grynaeus and LGy 2002), Kalotaszeg (Kóczyán et al. 1977; Péntek and Szabó 1985; Vasas 1985), and Székler's from Homoród (Gub 1993, 1996, 2005), Kovászna (Rácz and Füzi 1973) and other parts of the country (Frendl 2001, 2002a, 2002b), abounded in ethnomedicinal knowledge. Several ethnobotanical surveys were carried out in the Csángós' villages of Moldova (Halászné 1981; Halász 2010) and Gyimes-valley, consisting of 3 settlements, namely Gyimes-felsőlok, Gyimesközéplak and Gyimesbükk (Kóczyán et al. 1975; 1976; Rab et al. 1979; Rab 1982, 2001; Molnár Zs and Babai 2009) dealing also with ethnopharmacological topics. These reports are available mostly in Hungarian (some also abstracted in English), including the vernacular and scientific plant names, and most of them discussed also the plant parts used and the ways of application in human and veterinary medicine. Only a few studies were published about the isolated bioactive constituents and pharmacological effects of the ethnobotanically described plant taxa of these regions, screening and proving their therapeutical effect (Fórika et al. 1965; Rácz 1974).

Among the Transylvanian ethnic groups, similarly to the Germans and Széklers the catholic Csángós were also intermixed with the Romanian populations. They represent peculiar ethnic, cultural and linguistic islands *sensu* Hammer et al. (Hammer et al. 2011, Tánzos 2010). Having emigrated to the regions Moldova, Gyimes and Barcaság, the Csángós guard unique archaic features associated with the knowledge and use of nature (Isohookana-Asunmaa 2012). In the eastern region of the Csángós (living in the Úz-valley) only one complex survey has been carried out so far,

which summarizes ethnographical, historical and geographical data of the villages Csinód and Egerszék (Bárth 2004). In our preliminary study some ethnobotanical data were classified according to the age of the informants in Csinód (Papp et al. 2011).

The aim of this study was to describe several new ethnobotanical and ethnographical data in relation to local peculiar beliefs about food, medicinal, ornamental and fodder plants from home gardens in Csinód.

Materials and methods

Study area

The village Csinód (in Romanian: Cinod) is located in East Transylvania, the uppermost part of the Úz-valley (in Romanian: Valea Uzului, Fig. 1) at about 1200 m above sea level. It is isolated from other villages due to the significant distances and the bad condition of roads. Csíkszentmárton (in Romanian: Sânmartin), the nearest settlement is located at a distance of 20 kms from Csinód. Due to the difficult travelling conditions people have little contact with outsiders and each other, as well. About 200 Hungarian inhabitants, called Csángós by the locals, live here on geographically dispersed farms. They work in the agriculture as

self-providers, supplemented with preparation of special local cheeses of sheep and cow.

The village has only one shop, one school and a little Catholic church, with the Mass held once in 2 months. There are no telephone boots, post office, or signal for mobile phones. They can use their mobile only at one point of the mountain (Bárth 2004). The settlement has neither permanent medical service, nor medicine supply, either veterinary or pharmaceutical. The landscape and the environment connect closely to the everyday life of the people, comprising a regular use of the plants in the traditional human medicine and veterinary, too. Although there is a special herb woman or herbalist, every inhabitant knows, collects and uses medicinal plants from the local flora. Forced by the lack of doctors, some people have self-studied certain medical topics from books and learned from physicians practising at other settlements, thereby influencing the local curing methods with professional medical treatments. Some locals are trained e.g. in human dentistry, in administering injections or in veterinary medicine.

Although the inhabitants are catholic, several people, mainly women rely on beliefs, superstitions, pow-wowing and magic words as part of irrational and magico-mythological curing procedures for various diseases beside the manual treatments. On the other hand, these practices are also used as protective agents



Fig. 1 Map of Úz-valley (Google Earth 5.0, <http://earth.google.com>)

against some special natural phenomena and dangerous animals.

Data collection and documentation

Csángó people are bilingual: at school they have to study in Romanian, however, due to their Hungarian roots, the majority of the families speaks Hungarian as well as Romanian, facilitating the interaction and communication during our work in spite of the local Csángó dialect. Moreover, they apply several unique formulas, phrases and verbs, completed with some Romanian “loan-words” in the course of plant usage. Apparently, sometimes the vernacular plant names were applied to more than one species, or to scientific *taxa*, necessitating field-based plant identification (Szabó and Péntek 1976), botanical collection and identification keys (Király 2009).

In our study altogether 13 gardens were investigated in Csinód in the summers of 2007–2009. Methods of data collection included: free interviews and study of handwritten notes about the inhabitants' healing methods and knowledge of medicinal plant use, data recording with dictaphone (Olympus VN-4100 PC), plant data collection by photos (Canon Ixy Digital 400 PC 1038) about the living specimens in the gardens and dried ones stored in special chambers, as well as preparing herbaria (Cunningham 2001; Monteiro et al. 2006; Martin 2007; Heinrich et al. 2009). Notes were taken about all oral and written data throughout our collecting trip. Plant taxa were identified as species, or in some cases at generic level with the identification key of Király (2009). Voucher specimens with unique codes were deposited at the Department of Pharmacognosy of the University of Pécs.

The interview questions covered the following data: popular local name of the food, medicinal, ornamental and fodder plants in home gardens, taking into consideration the folk nomenclatural formulas; how and from where the plants were planted into the gardens; drug parts, detailed use and curative power of the taxa with „home prescription”, origin of the medical knowledge (e.g. studied, read or heard data), and magic superstitions associated with the plants. The popular names of the plants and original notes of the people according to the special terminology of the Csángós were written in *italics* or put between inverted commas.

Results

The largest proportion of the reported 85 plant taxa registered in home gardens of the Úz-valley were designated as medicinal (39 %) or ornamental plants (38 %), while the number of food and fodder taxa was significantly lower (Fig. 2).

The traditional Csángó plant terminology in Csinód often uses unique names for habitats, animals, special morphological characters and various illnesses (Table 1–3). In particular, the Csángó plant names often refer to the habitat of the plant, e.g. *Ajuga* species are called *mogyoróaljalapi*—meaning “leaf under the hazel-nut” and *Sempervivum tectorum* L. is known by the name *kőrózsa*—“rose of rock”. In addition, names of fodder plants refer to the animal fed with the given plant, e.g. *pulykafű*—turkey grass (*Achillea millefolium* L.) and *tyukorfű*—hen grass (*Stellaria media* (L.) Vill.). In some cases local ethnoclassification in Csinód makes use of special characters, such as shape, colour, taste or odor of the taxa, namely *fehérhátúfü*—white back grass (*Potentilla anserina* L.), *kék katáng*—blue chicory (*Cichorium intybus* L.), *békaláb*—leg of frog (*Equisetum arvense* L.) and *kámforos minta*—camphor mint (*Mentha × piperita* L.), or the diseases which can be cured by the given medicinal plant, such as *ótvarburján*—herb for scab (*Hypericum perforatum* L.). However, beside the local Hungarian nomenclature several Romanian “loan-words” appear in folk taxonomy, e.g. *zsanika*—*Alchemilla vulgaris* L. or *podballapi*—*Tussilago farfara* L. Peculiarly, in the nomenclature in Csinód other unique plant names like cuckoo flower, cuckoo tongue or cuckoo grass

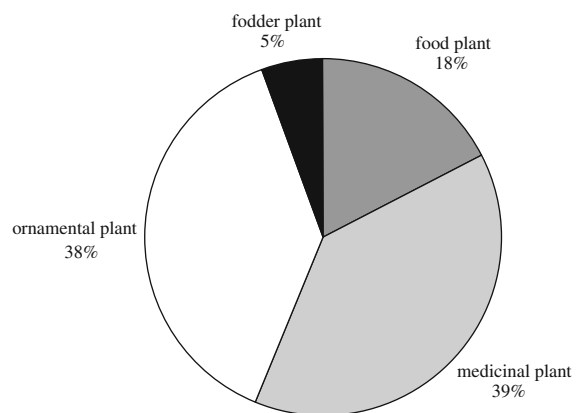


Fig. 2 Plant usage in home gardens of Csinód

(*kakukkvirág*, *kakukknyelv*, *kakukkfű*) are mentioned for *Primula veris* Huds., explained with the early appearance of flowers in spring: “*It is in bloom when the cuckoo sings.*”

The form of home preparations of cultivated plants and wild taxa varies from tea, wash, infusion, foment, poultice, bath (sitting bath, footbath) and cream to the fresh form (leaf sap, herb latex) (Tables 1–2). Frequently fomentations of fresh leaves are applied with honey (e.g. *Brassica oleracea* L.), simply dressed with gauze as a whole (e.g. *Ajuga* sp., *Plantago major* L., *Tussilago farfara* L.) or in grated form (*Solanum tuberosum* L.) with or without clabber on palm or sole. Creams are prepared by adding lard as vehicle to the plant parts (e.g. *Calendula officinalis* L.), while footbaths and poultices are made with salt in most cases.

Locally, food plants of home gardens are used as major ingredients or spices in soups, meat dishes, paste, pickles, wines, syrups, jams or compotes in the village. In addition, local dishes are prepared also from some not cultivated wild plants. For example, *Taraxacum officinale* Weber ex Wiggers is known in syrup, the leaves of *Tussilago farfara* L. stuffed with meat, or *Urtica dioica* L. and *Sinapis arvensis* L. in soup (Table 2).

Moreover, some wild-growing bushes and trees were also cultivated in the gardens. Fruits and leaves of *Rubus idaeus* L., *Ribes nigrum* L., *Vaccinium vitis-idaea* L. and *V. myrtillus* L. are considered in home treatments. The fruits are blended with sugar in syrup and jam (in ratio 2:1, in kg), but exclusively in cold form without boiling. Additionally, the fruits of wild *Ribes uva-crispa* L. and *Vaccinium vitis-idaea* L. cultivated also in gardens were described as the most preferred pickles preserved with salicylic acid, similarly to *Phaseolus vulgaris* L. growing in gardens. *Beta vulgaris* L. var. *conditiva* Alef. is prepared with sugar and vinegar.

Among cultivated trees *Malus sylvestris* (L.) Mill. and *Pyrus communis* L. can be mentioned as ingredients in local drinks. Specifically, wine is prepared from fruits of bushes in this region. During the vinification the fruits of *Ribes nigrum* L. and *Rubus idaeus* L. are pressed, and after adding water and sugar, are kept for six weeks in a cool chamber. Nevertheless, they say: “*The wine and syrup of Ribes nigrum* L. are able to kill the heart.” Additionally, in the case of *Rosa canina* L. some yeast is administered to the fruits to enhance the process of wine ripening.

Among the cultivated food plants, the roasted internal part of the fruit of *Solanum melongena* L. is grated and blended with onion, oil, egg, lemon juice and mustard resulting a peculiar paste named *vinete*, which is a common culinary preparation among Romanians. *Satureja hortensis* L. was mentioned in *székelykáposzta* (Székler cabbage) prepared from *Brassica oleracea* L. and meat. Large variation was observed in some food taxa according to the size and pattern of the seeds e.g. in *Phaseolus* such as the *bivalyafuszulyka* (large seed, *Ph. coccineus*), *viaszfuszulyka* (varicoloured, *Ph. vulgaris* convar. *vulgaris*), as well as *törpefuszulyka* (tiny yellow seed, *Ph. vulgaris* convar. *nanus*).

Beside the berry-producing bushes, other woody species, such as *Betula pendula* Roth and *Larix decidua* Mill. were mentioned among the medicinally used plant species around the gardens (Table 1–2). A special belief—which is not connected to any medical application—was recorded about *Pinus nigra* J.F. Arnold. In their belief, the pine cone taken into the house causes infestation by bed bugs (*Cimex lectularius* L.), namely: “*Cones produce the bed bugs.*”

Traditionally, beside the plant names several local terms of diseases were mentioned in the folk taxonomy of human and veterinary medicine, e.g. bruised skin called „*pecsendzsia*” cured with the tea of *Betula pendula* Roth, or “*pokolszökés*” treated with *Ajuga* sp. In veterinary medicine, *Armoracia rusticana* P. Gaertn., B. Mey et Scherb. and *Helleborus purpurascens* W. et K. were listed as the main curative plants. After punching the ears of a pig with a needle, the root of *Helleborus purpurascens* W. et K. is pulled into the hole, resulting: “*It pulls the headache to this place.*”; this ethnoveterinary use of *Helleborus* has been described elsewhere in Europe and it has been detailed also among Romanians (Bogdan et al. 1990). Wild fodder plants are given to the animals (chicken) generally in fresh form (e.g. *Urtica dioica* L., *Potentilla anserina* L.) or cooked with grits (*Stellaria media* (L.) Vill.) (Table 1–2).

Of the ornamental plants described (Table 3), very few species are used for phytotherapeutical purposes in Csinód (e.g. leaf of *Tanacetum balsamita* L. for wounds), although several others are valued for their medicinal effect in the healing practice of other areas. Ornamentals are planted from seeds obtained from their own garden or exchanged between each other. Some taxa were planted from the wild, such as

Table 1 Plants in the kitchen-gardens in Csinód

| Scientific plant name | Hungarian vernacular name | Status | Part used | Traditional use of the plants | No. of voucher specimens |
|--|----------------------------------|--------|----------------|--|--------------------------|
| <i>Allium cepa</i> L. | vöröshagyma, vereshagyma | C | bulb | Food plant | CG1/01 |
| <i>A. schoenoprasum</i> L. | snidling | C | Leaf | Spice | CG1/02 |
| <i>Anethum graveolens</i> L. | kapor | C | Herb | Spice | CG1/03 |
| <i>Apium graveolens</i> L. | zeller, celler | C | Herb | Spice | CG1/04 |
| <i>Armoracia rusticana</i> P. Gaertn., B. Mey et Scherb. | torma | C | Root | For cough as foment, food | CG1/05 |
| <i>Artemisia dracunculoides</i> L. | tárkony | C | Herb | Spice | CG1/06 |
| <i>Beta vulgaris</i> L. var. <i>conditiva</i> Alef. | cékla | C | Tuber | As pickle and as food | CG1/07 |
| <i>Betula pendula</i> Roth | nyír | W | Leaf, fluid | For kidney inflammation as diuretic tea, for rheumatic pain and skin illness as foment | CG1/08 |
| <i>Brassica oleracea</i> L. | káposzta | C | Leaf | For wound, fever and chilblain as foment, food plant | CG1/09 |
| <i>B. oleracea</i> L. var. <i>gongyloides</i> L. | karalábé | C | Tuber | Food plant | CG1/10 |
| <i>Daucus carota</i> L. | murok, sárgarépa | C | Root | Food plant | CG1/11 |
| <i>Fragaria vesca</i> L. | eper, szamóca | C | Fruit | Food plant | CG1/12 |
| <i>Malus sylvestris</i> (L.) Mill. | cigánalma, alma | W | Fruit | Drink | CG1/13 |
| <i>Mentha crispa</i> L. | fodorminta | C | Leaf | For cough and kidney inflammation as tea | CG1/14 |
| <i>Mentha × piperita</i> L. | hidegminta, kámforos menta | C | Leaf | For cough and kidney inflammation as tea | CG1/15 |
| <i>Phaseolus vulgaris</i> L. | faszulyka, fuszulyka, zödpuszuly | C | Fruit | As pickle and as food | CG1/16 |
| <i>Pisum sativum</i> L. | borsó | C | Fruit | Food plant | CG1/17 |
| <i>Prunus avium</i> L. | cseresznye | C | peduncle fruit | for kidney disease as tea | CG1/18 |
| <i>Pyrus communis</i> L. | körte | C | | drink | CG1/19 |
| <i>Ribes nigrum</i> L. | fekete ribizli | C | Leaf, fruit | Leaf for kidney inflammation and reduce the blood pressure, fruit as food, syrup and wine | CG1/20 |
| <i>Ribes uva-crispa</i> L. | egris | C | Fruit | As pickle and as food | CG1/21 |
| <i>Rubus idaeus</i> L. | málna | C, W | Leaf, fruit | Leaf for wound and furuncle, fruit as food and wine | CG1/22 |
| <i>Satureja hortensis</i> L. | csombor, házicsombor | C | Herb | For cough and inflammation of kidney as tea | CG1/23 |
| <i>Sinapis arvensis</i> L. | rabcsont | C | leaf | food | CG1/24 |
| <i>Solanum melongena</i> L. | vinete | C | Fruit | Food | CG1/25 |
| <i>Solanum tuberosum</i> L. | pityóka | C | tuber | for cough, toothache, earache, fever, wound and swelling as foment, food | CG1/26 |
| <i>Sorbus aucuparia</i> L. | kórusfa, belekenyér, belekenyer | W | Bark | For madness and toothache with salt in a mixture with the bark of <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> L. and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> L. | CG1/27 |
| <i>Stellaria media</i> (L.) Vill. | tyukorfű, csukorfű | W | Herb | For chill as poultice, fodder for chicken, cows and lambs | CG1/28 |
| <i>Vaccinium myrtillus</i> L. | fekete kokozsa, kukujza | W | Fruit | For diarrhoea, food as jam | CG1/29 |
| <i>Vaccinium vitis-idaea</i> L. | piros kokozsa, piros kukujza | W | Leaf | For kidney disease, pickle | CG1/30 |

Status of the plants W wild, C cultivated

Leontopodium alpinum Cass. and *Melissa officinalis* L. from the Gyimes-mountains without known medicinal uses in this region. Specimens growing

wildly such as *Vaccinium myrtillus* L., *V. vitis-idaea* L. were described also among replanted taxa from the gardens studied (Table 1).

Table 2 Medicinal taxa among the ornamental, cultivated and wild plants of the gardens in Csinód

| Scientific plant name | Hungarian vernacular name | Status | Part used | Traditional use of the plants | No. of voucher specimens |
|--|---|--------|--------------|---|--------------------------|
| <i>Achillea millefolium</i> L. | <i>ceckafark, ceckafarok, egérfarkfü, pulykavirág, pulykafü, cickafarok, cickafark, cickafarka, féregfarkfü</i> | W | Herb | For inflammatory and wound as wash, bath and footbath, for cough, liver and kidney disease, piles and gastric ulcer, with oak bark and <i>Rumex</i> sp. for diarrhoea of animals as tea | CG2/01 |
| <i>Ajuga</i> sp. | <i>magyaraljalapi, mogyoróaljalapi</i> | W | Leaf | Soaked leaves in cool water for wound as foment | CG2/02 |
| <i>Alchemilla vulgaris</i> L. | <i>zsanika, harmatfü, harmattartó lapi</i> | W | Leaf | Against bleeding and kidney disease as wash, bath and footbath | CG2/03 |
| <i>Calendula officinalis</i> L. | <i>cigányvirág, cigánvirág</i> | C | Flower | For wound as an astringent cream | CG2/04 |
| <i>Capsella bursa-pastoris</i> (L.) Medik. | <i>pásztortarisznya, pásztortáska</i> | W | Herb | Against bleeding | CG2/05 |
| <i>Chelidonium majus</i> L. | <i>kutyatej, vérehulló fecskevirág</i> | W | Yellow sap | For wart | CG2/06 |
| <i>Daphne mezereum</i> L. | <i>vadboroszlán, farkashárs</i> | W | Bark | For toothache as tea | CG2/07 |
| <i>Equisetum arvense</i> L. | <i>bekaláb</i> | W | Sterile stem | For kidney disease and chill as tea and sitting bath | CG2/08 |
| <i>Helleboruspurpurascens</i> W. et K. | <i>espenz</i> | W | Root | Root pulled into the ear of young pig as stimulus therapy and for erysipelas | CG2/09 |
| <i>Hypericum perforatum</i> L. | <i>ábelvére, ótvarburján, jódombfü, pozsárnica, vérburján</i> | W | Herb | For liver, kidney and hearth disease, gastric ulcer, piles, foot pain, scab and other skin illness infused as bath | CG2/10 |
| <i>Larix decidua</i> Mill. | <i>szomorúfenyő</i> | W | Cone fluid | For burned wound | CG2/11 |
| <i>Matricaria recutita</i> L. | <i>kamilla, orvosi székfü</i> | W | Flower | For eye inflammatory, toothache and liver disease | CG2/12 |
| <i>Pelargonium</i> sp. | <i>lizi, lizilapi</i> | O | Leaf | For wound as foment | CG2/13 |
| <i>Potentilla anserina</i> L. | <i>fehérhátüfü, libapimpó</i> | W | Herb | For diarrhoea, fodder | CG2/14 |
| <i>Plantago major</i> L. | <i>útilapi, utilapi</i> | W | Leaf | For wound and furuncle as foment | CG2/15 |
| <i>Primula veris</i> Huds. | <i>kakukkvirág, kakukknelyv, kakukkfü</i> | W | Flower | For cough, tranquillizing against insomnia and cough | CG2/16 |
| <i>Rosa canina</i> L. | <i>hecsedli, hecsedlibogyó, csipkerózsa</i> | W | Fruit | For cough and toothache as tea, wine | CG2/17 |
| <i>Rumex</i> sp. | <i>lósódi, lósóska</i> | W | Seed, root | Seeds + oak bark + yarrow for diarrhoea of animals as tea, root as laxative and for biliary diseases | CG2/18 |
| <i>Sempervivum tectorum</i> L. | <i>körözsa</i> | C | Leaf sap | Dropped into the ear against inflammation | CG2/19 |
| <i>Taraxacum officinale</i> Weber ex Wiggers | <i>lánclapi, lánctüvirág, tejeslapi</i> | W | Flower | For cough as sweet syrup | CG2/20 |
| <i>Tussilago farfara</i> L. | <i>martilapi, podbánlapi, podbállapi</i> | W | Leaf | Soaked leaf in hot water for healing wounds | CG2/21 |
| <i>Urtica dioica</i> L. | <i>csihán</i> | W | Herb | Sprinkled with water of stream for snake bite with magic superstitions, for vasoconstriction and to reduce the blood pressure, fodder | CG2/22 |

Status of the plants W wild, C cultivated, O ornamental

Finally, among the magic-mythological curing procedures some special plant usage can be mentioned, e.g. in the case of *Urtica dioica* (Table 2). Occasionally, if someone is bitten by the common European viper (*Vipera berus* L.) or weasel (*Mustela nivalis* L.) the whole shoot is dipped three times into the stream, in the direction of the flow. The injured body part is

sprinkled and scrubbed with the water from the plant, accompanied by magic runes and verses. On the other hand, people believe that if the skin of the snake killed before St. George's day (24th April) is pulled onto a stick and dipped into the water with *Urtica dioica* L. simultaneously, the wounds can be scrubbed and healed, as well. Nowadays only the elderly know those

Table 3 Ornamental and food uses of plants of the home gardens of Csinód. Status of the plants

| Scientific plant name | Hungarian vernacular name | Status | No. of voucher specimens |
|---|---|--------|--------------------------|
| <i>Aconitum moldavicum</i> Hacq. | No popular name | O | CG3/01 |
| <i>Althaea rosea</i> (L.) Cav. | <i>fátalan rózsza</i> | O | CG3/02 |
| <i>Antirrhinum majus</i> L. | <i>tátogtató</i> | O | CG3/03 |
| <i>Bellis perennis</i> L. | <i>boglárka</i> | W | CG3/04 |
| <i>Chrysanthemum</i> sp. | <i>krizántli</i> | O | CG3/05 |
| <i>Cichorium intybus</i> L. | <i>katáng</i> | W | CG3/06 |
| <i>Cosmos bipinnatus</i> Cav. | <i>lepkevirág</i> | O | CG3/07 |
| <i>Dahlia</i> sp. | <i>györgyina</i> | O | CG3/08 |
| <i>Dicentra spectabilis</i> (L.) Lem. | <i>csercse</i> | O | CG3/09 |
| <i>Euphorbia milii</i> | <i>Jézus koronája kaktusz</i> | O | CG3/10 |
| Ursch et Leandri | | | |
| <i>Galium aparine</i> L. | <i>ragadvány</i> | W | CG3/11 |
| <i>Gladiolus</i> sp. | <i>sásvirág, kardvirág</i> | O | CG3/12 |
| <i>Helianthus annuus</i> L. | <i>napraforgó</i> | C | CG3/13 |
| <i>Heracleum sphondylium</i> L. | No popular name; leaf as fodder | W | CG3/14 |
| <i>Impatiens balsamina</i> L. | No popular name | O | CG3/15 |
| <i>Jasminum</i> sp. | No popular name | O | CG3/16 |
| <i>Leontopodium alpinum</i> Cass. | <i>havasi gyopár</i> | W | CG3/17 |
| <i>Leonurus cardiaca</i> L. | <i>szúrós gyöngyalja</i> | C | CG3/18 |
| <i>Lilium bulbiferum</i> L. | <i>Jézus koronája, Jézus koszorúja, Krisztus koronája, tüzes lilium</i> | O | CG3/19 |
| <i>Lupinus</i> sp. | <i>kávénvirág, gyertyafű</i> | O | CG3/20 |
| <i>Melissa officinalis</i> L. | <i>citromfű</i> | C | CG3/21 |
| <i>Mentha longifolia</i> (L.) Nath. | <i>vad fodorminta</i> | W | CG3/22 |
| <i>Myosotis nemorosa</i> Besser | <i>nefelejcs</i> | W | CG3/23 |
| <i>Paeonia</i> sp. | <i>basarózsa</i> | O | CG3/24 |
| <i>Papaver somniferum</i> L. | <i>díszmák, ciframák, mák</i> | C | CG3/25 |
| <i>Petunia</i> sp. | <i>petúnia</i> | O | CG3/26 |
| <i>Phalaris arundinacea</i> L. cv. <i>Picta</i> | <i>pántlikafű, szalagfű</i> | O | CG3/27 |
| <i>Philadelphus coronarius</i> L. | No popular name | O | CG3/28 |
| <i>Phlox paniculata</i> L. | <i>ősz boroszlán</i> | O | CG3/29 |
| <i>Polygonum lapathifolium</i> L. | <i>kellegica, hunyor, hunyika, hunor; herb as fodder</i> | W | CG3/30 |
| <i>Syringa vulgaris</i> L. | <i>boroszlán</i> | O | CG3/31 |
| <i>Tagetes patulus</i> L. | <i>szagos banka</i> | O | CG3/32 |
| <i>Tanacetum balsamita</i> L. | <i>Boldogasszony lapi</i> | O | CG3/33 |
| <i>Tropaeolum majus</i> L. | <i>tőcséres</i> | O | CG3/34 |
| <i>Viburnum opulus</i> L. cv. <i>Roseum</i> | <i>labdarózsa</i> | O | CG3/35 |

W wild, C cultivated, O ornamental

special accompanying magic words, which were not recorded or noted because of their belief that sharing their knowledge with a younger person leads to the

disappearance of the magic effect. This phenomenon represents an ethnographical significance perhaps, in addition to its ethnomedicinal value.

Discussion

Only some old papers present data about gardens from the regions that once belonged to Hungary, but today form part of Romania, providing information on home garden culture (Péterfy 1907), on aristocratic, civil and medico-botanical gardens (Rapaics 1935; 1940; Stirling 1983). Indeed, these works introduced some basic garden types with plant lists, hypothetic maps and customs in connection with the main medicinal taxa with application forms in their era.

This paper presents new data about the traditional culture of plant growing in home gardens of a local ethnical group called Csángós of Transylvania, more specifically of those living isolated in the Úz-valley. The use of altogether 87 plant species, that belong to 36 families, was reported from 13 gardens in Csinód, including food, ornamental, medicinal and fodder *taxa* applied in human therapy and veterinary medicine. At present, home gardens of Csinód comprise *taxa* planted from seeds of own and other gardens, and from surrounding mountains. The data recorded were similar to those in the Romanian ethnobotanical encyclopaedia of Butura (1979), completed with new data on *Rubus idaeus* L., *Solanum tuberosum* L., *Sorbus aucuparia* L., *Achillea millefolium* L., *Plantago major* L. and *Urtica dioica* L.

A special local Csángó terminology is used for various plant *taxa* and diseases in the Úz-valley, which is different from the terms applied in other Csángó regions (Kóczian et al. 1975, 1976; Halász 1981; Bárh 2004; Halász 2010), or by other ethnical groups of Transylvanian Hungarians and Romanians (Pétek and Szabó 1985). Similarly to other regions (Borza 1968; Vasas 1985; Frenzl 2001, 2002a, 2002b), in this area people know and use peculiar magic superstitions in the case of some species, accompanying the practical curative methods, as we have seen in the case of *Urtica dioica* L. applied against snake and weasel bite.

Conclusions

In conclusion: the valuable archaic elements of the ethnobotanical data presented in this paper are based on traditional observation and experience with strictly guarded oral and written recipes of plant use in Csinód

The traditional knowledge about the use of food, medicinal, ornamental and fodder *taxa* as dishes and

herbal remedies originate from archaic folklore medicinal practices in the mountains of Transylvania, underlining the importance of various home treatments for frequent illnesses. This study highlights the necessity of preservation and documentation of the disappearing indigenous medical information among the “Csángós”.

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