

**2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on Alfred Russel Wallace- His Predecessors and Successors. Naturalists,  
Explorers and Field Scientists in South-East Asia and Australasia**

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**Herbal Plants in Traditional Malay Culture: their Medicinal and Commercial Potentials**

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A great variety of herbs have been exploited by the Malays since immemorial as alternative medicine. However, these plants were largely unexploited commercially. Herbs have always been thought of as good alternative medicine, but these plants have potential to be cultivated as cash crops. There could be a small fortune going to waste in our backyards – plants with medicinal value but considered by most of us to be weeds or useless plants. Herbs have been used by many societies, including the Malay in traditional medicine for ages but their potential as a money-spinner has yet to be fully tapped by Malaysians in a big way. This scenario is set to change with the revival of herbalism worldwide. Even in Malaysia, more and more people are turning to nature, to herbal therapies for treatment of various ailments. Herbs are no longer something that would just interest the elderly. Many younger people are becoming more aware of the importance of a holistic approach to health. The rising importance of herbs has sparked off interest in their commercial value. Local companies involved in developing herbal products are now trying to cultivate medicinal plants. Since 2010 the government was seriously taking various steps in making Malaysia a top exporter of herbs and herbal products. This paper will identify selected examples of the famous local herbal plants and highlights their medicinal value based on past research and their commercial potential locally and internationally and at the same time suggesting that a thorough research be carried out to document aspect of local knowledge relating to the introduction and utilization of herbal plants in the traditional Malay medicine and healing system.