

Uses of *Justicia spicigera* in medicine and as a source of pigments

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ABSTRACT

Justicia spicigera (muicle) is a plant that has been used from the pre-Hispanic era to contemporary times in Mexico. It has been used in the traditional medicine for healing diseases such as dysentery, diabetes, leukemia, and anemia, just to mention some human disorders. It has been used for obtaining indigo dye after making extraction with water to be used for coloring of baskets, crafts, and clothes. The pigments, as a powder, have been studied for use for coloring foods. The dyeing characteristics of the *J. spicigera* pigments have antioxidant properties due to the flavonoids content. Since this plant has been used for making infusions to people for curing some physical disorders, today *J. spicigera* is being studied to take advantage of its dyeing and antioxidant properties to be used in the food and pharmaceutical industries.

Key words: *Justicia spicigera* (muicle), antioxidants, traditional medicine, pigments for foods, indigo, phytochemicals