

PLANTS ABOUT US

USES OF THE NIPA

Our national tree is the narra. But the humble nipa plant, friend of poor and rich alike would be a more fitting symbol of our islands. The typical Filipino family lives in a nipa house.

The nipa plant is a modest member of the family of palms. It grows humbly in muddy tidal flats or in narrow strips along inland streams. In the public forests of the Philippines alone there are more than 52,000 hectares of nipa swamps. Nipa gatherers cut maturing petioles and slash the leaflets with a sharp knife. The leaflets are then doubled back about one third of their length, arranged over a slender piece of bamboo so that they overlap, and then sewed on with sliced rattan making a shingle. Bundled in tens, the shingles are then shipped to the towns by cart and boat, peddled on the street by loud-voiced porters. They sell for from ₱3 to ₱7 a thousand, depending on the grade of nipa.

Nipa has other uses. The leaves can be made into raincoats, sun hats, wrappings for rice cake. The midribs can be made into brooms. The petioles serve as food when young, or as firewood when dry. Even the seeds are edible. But its most popular product is tuba. For three months

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SAMPAGUITA

By MOISES S. VIVIEZCA



Sampaguita! Lovely flower! Full of promise!

The sampaguita is the national flower of the Philippines. It is made the national flower of our land by the proclamation issued by Governor-General Frank Murphy on February 1, 1934, through the recommendation of a committee appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture and Commerce.

Nearly every well organized country in the world has adopted a certain flower to represent its traditions. Japan, for example, has her chrysanthemum. France her fleur-de-lis, and America her wild rose. There is much in a flower to have and to hold,—its fragrance, its loveliness, its charm.

The sampaguita is the symbol of our wealthiest sentiments. It depicts the physical and mental character of our people. Its fragrance brings back sweet memories. It gives courage to old age and hope to the youth. It is enchanting when worn as a necklace. The sampaguita plays an important part in the legends and traditions of the Filipino people. It is the most beloved flower throughout the Philippines. Its pure white fragrant blossom symbolizes purity, humility, love, hope, and reverence.