

On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit...and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. - Revelation 22.2

John doesn't tell us what the dozen kinds of fruit are, nor exactly what their various leaves will heal and how. His tree, fruit, leaves are symbolic. In several fields across rural Mozambique, CCM is growing much more than a dozen varieties of plants which, whatever their symbolic value, have actual, physical healing properties, for individuals in this nation of Mozambique.

These all are crucial in the fight against AIDS and associated diseases and infections. Here in a country where the government's budget for pharmaceuticals is only \$1 per person per year, and 1 in 6 adults is HIV+, these plants are crucial – locally growable, inexpensive, and sustainable. Families of subsistence farmers struggle in the best of times, and when someone in the family is weak with AIDS, his or her labour is lost, and the family rapidly becomes even more vulnerable and destitute.



Many of these plants you might recognize – aloe vera, garlic, periwinkle, peanut, passion flower, artemisia, marigold and many others. A few you might even have used – like the aloe vera plant for healing skin lesions. The proven uses of others in treating AIDS-related conditions might surprise you.

Peanuts and passion flower fight the insomnia which robs the body of precious strength.

Periwinkle builds immunity, and fights urinary infections.

Artemisia, like garlic too, fights malaria which so often attacks those whose resistance has been weakened by AIDS.

Garlic also fights herpes and hypertension.

CCM trains community volunteers in these uses. The typical course runs two weeks. They learn how to tend the plants, how and when to harvest flowers, seeds, leaves, roots—whatever is the plant's therapeutically active part. They learn how to prepare the medicines: some become powders, others are syrups, still others are lotions. They learn how to store them, in recycled jars or bottles or clay pots. They learn how to administer the healing product to affected families, who pay only what they can.



These fields are rural pharmaceutical factories, and the volunteers' houses are pharmacies. The project is headed by our colleagues Balbina, a nurse, and Baltazar, an agronomist. From CCM nursery fields, they take cuttings and seedlings, to transplant to new pharmacy fields which they will start in other communities. In the photos you see one of their Christmas educational displays.

We pray for rich harvests of medicinal plants for the nation, and pray that the produce of all those fields bring sustenance and healing to many. What a blessing for Christmas and all next year.

In mission and service, Karen and Bill Butt