

'Sanjeevani' (*Actiniopteris dichotoma* Bedd) is amazing; potentially, a promising plant for the warming globe!

B.K.S. Madhuranga¹ and L.P. Jayatissa²

¹Department of Chemistry, University of Ruhuna, Matara

²Department of Botany, University of Ruhuna, Matara

Actiniopteris dichotoma Bedd (ACTINOPTERIDACEAE), locally known as 'Sanjeevani', is a rare medicinal plant in Sri Lanka. Botanically it is a small, drought resistant fern (2-15cm high) with fan-like fronds, hence very much similar to a miniature palm. It is found as a terrestrial or epilithic plant in some localities of the dry zone in Sri Lanka. It has also been reported from India, Sri Lanka and some African countries. Many of these countries used this as a medicinal plant to prepare ailments for various disorders including diarrhea, dysentery, worm infestations, skin diseases, diabetes and blood pressure.

In our preliminary observations it has been revealed that it can grow well in cliffs facing to desiccating winds and high temperature. Hence, the present investigation was aimed to determine the temperature tolerance *A. dichotoma* using a simple test.

A sample plants 10 with various sizes were 'cooked' individually for 15-20 min in hot water at 98-100⁰C and another set of similar (uprooted and air dried) plants were freeze dried. 'Cooked' and freeze dried plants were planted in plastic pots with loam soil and kept in a green house under observation.

The ash color of the fronds of dried plants converted to a healthy green color within 3-5 min in hot water at 95-100⁰C indicating that chlorophyll was not degraded during drying or cooking of plants. Young new shoots were produced from the rhizome of both freeze dried and 'cooked' plants within 7-10 days.

The results indicate that *A. dichotoma* is capable to tolerate wide range of temperature fluctuations and hence it could be one of the species promoted by global warming.

Key words: *Actiniopteris dichotoma*, *Medicinal plants*, *Temperature tolerance*