Daily News epaper

Ayurvedic portion with musk

BY SHALUKA MANCHANAYAKE AND GAYAN NARANDENIYA

Musk is one of the rare ingredients used in many Ayurvedic medicines. In addition, musk, which is widely used in the perfume industry, is of great value due to its rarity.

The production of fake musk has also increased due to the unavailability of sufficient quantities of original musk from deer species that live only in a few countries, including India.

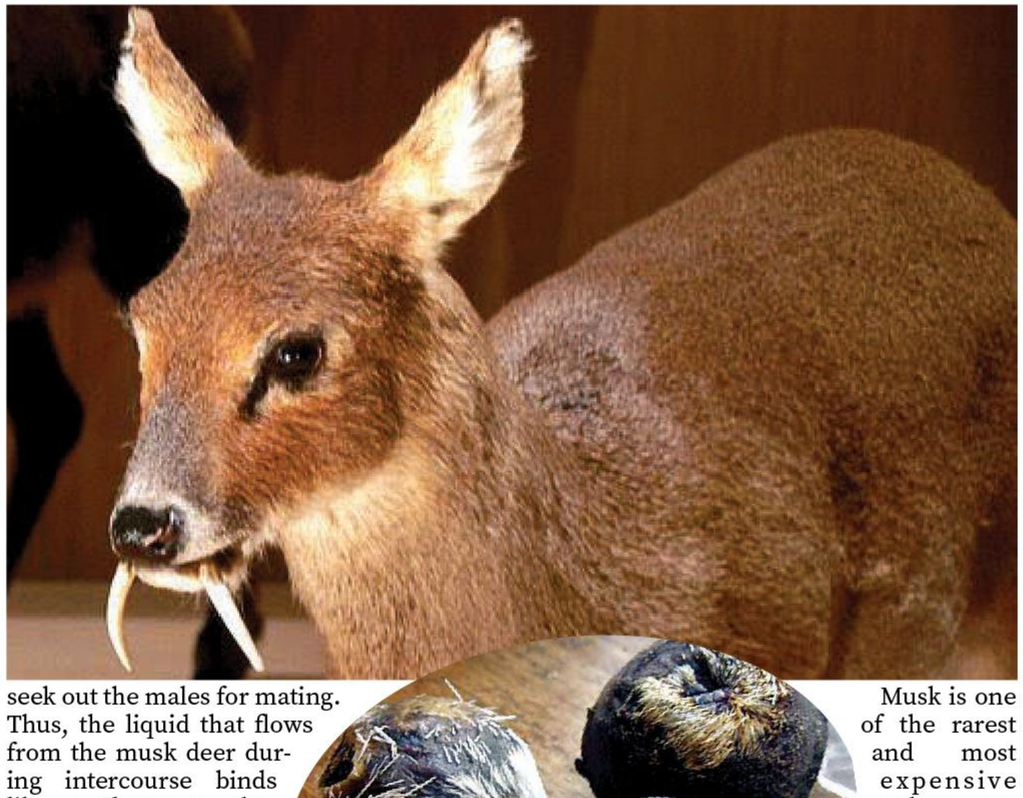
The killing of these musk deer by poachers with the intention of getting the entire amount of musk in the animal's possession at once has also become a disaster.

Animals

Musk is a compound derived from the body of the male 'musk deer'. These animals have a pleasing appearance and are shorter than the normal deer. Musk deer does not have the antlers as the normal deer. Instead it has a pair of very small horns.

Another characteristic feature of musk deer is that it has two pointed teeth protruding from its mouth. Countries inhabited by the musk deer are India, Tibet, Pakistan, Afghanistan, China, Siberia, Mongolia and Vietnam.

A liquid which comes out from a musk deer's penis is deposited in a cell near its navel and later becomes musk. About two to three years after birth, the musk deer reaches a young age. During the period in which they seek sexual intercourse, the liquid required for the production of musk flows abundantly.



Intercourse

Its smell is carried by the winds and spreads throughout the environment where the female musk deer sniffs the scent and seek out the males for mating. Thus, the liquid that flows from the musk deer during intercourse binds like a plaster to the said cell. After a few weeks, it thickens and dries out, which is then called musk.

This liquid accumulates in the cell near the navel of the musk deer, causing itching at the site when it dries. Accordingly, when the musk deer plucks the cell with its hooves, the cell containing the musk separates from the body and falls on to the ground.

Medicine

Musk can be collected by keeping an eye on it. Nowadays poachers kill musk deer and try to collect the musk.

Musk is one of the rarest and most expensive substances used in the preparation of medicines for various ailments. It is also used in Ayurvedic medicine to make various oils. Ayurveda states that musk can be used to cure hemorrhoids and asthma and to maintain a youthful appearance for a long time.

The books on Ayurvedic medicine claim that the use of musk to prolong life has been popular since ancient times. In addition, it is said that musk can also be used to treat tuberculosis, eczema, leprosy and vision problems and so on.

In addition, musk is widely used in the perfume industry, which has become a very lucrative industry today. Musk is mixed with other ingredients in the preparation of perfumes. This will intensify the scent of the perfume and give it a long lasting scent.

Musk is said to have been used in perfumery not only in recent times but also for thousands of years. When it is used in the manufacture of perfumes, musk is mixed with alcohol or other chemicals.

Musk has also been used to attract wild animals, including in man-made perfume mixtures. For example, in 2018 the Indian authorities used the perfume Obsession by Calvin Klein to attract and thus trap a wild tiger that had attacked and killed more than a dozen people.

Perfume

Musk sticks, which are artificially flavoured with a substance that is reminiscent of musk perfume, are a popular confection in Australia.

Due to the increasing demand for musk and its rarity, some people have resorted to producing artificial musk. They process and grind grains such as barley, wheat, corn, beans together with goat, pork, sheep, or crocodile liver. They have also been able to create its fragrance in an artificial way.

SINCE OBTAINING DEER MUSK IS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TODAY, NEARLY ALL MUSK FRAGRANCE USED IN PERFUMERY IS SYNTHETIC, WHICH IS SOMETIMES CALLED "WHITE MUSK"

Since obtaining deer musk is extremely difficult today, nearly all musk fragrance used in perfumery is synthetic which is sometimes called "white musk". They can be divided into three major classes: aromatic nitro musk, polycyclic musk compounds, and macrocyclic musk compounds.

The first two groups have broad uses in the industry ranging from cosmetics to detergents. However, the detection of the first two chemical groups in human and environmental samples as well as their carcinogenic properties initiated a public debate on the use of these compounds and a ban or reduction of their use in many regions of the world.

Macrocyclic musk compounds are expected to replace them since these compounds appear to be safer.