

Medical Sciences Campus to study native medicinal plants ^[1]

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From Medical Sciences Campus NEWS ^[2] Jose Carlo, director of the MSC, announced the creation of a center to study Medicinal and Poisonous plants in the Botanical Garden of the UPR. The study of the therapeutic value of plants arises more and more interest in the modern world. Recent studies estimate that over 35 thousand plant species are used with medicinal purposes by different groups and cultures. However, only 40 tropical species have been included in modern pharmacopeia, reason why the tropical flora is a great health reserve, according to a Press Release for the Director. "The University sees the study of the tropical flora as an opportunity to contribute to the well-being of humanity. Through this development, we support scientific research and Puerto Rico's development. This project is a reality thanks to the sponsorship of the Toyota Foundation and the Communitarian Foundation, through a donation that both institutions granted to the School of Pharmacy of Puerto Rico," pointed out Dr. Carlo. For years, the UPR, has had a privileged spot in tropical flora research. Those investigations were started by the School of Pharmacy and count among them pioneering studies by Esteban Nuñez Meléndez, author of the book *Medicinal Plants of Puerto Rico*. Currently, researchers in the MSC, Río Piedras, Mayaguez, Humacao and Cayey are developing projects to find active components in tropical plants, which effects can serve as enzymatic inhibitors, antibacterial agents, as well as treatment for cancer, HIV, kidney stones and malaria. "This center opens the door to other research centers for medicinal tropical plants," added the Director of the MSC. This new development will provide herbariums to breed plants and spaces to study their medicinal and therapeutic value. It will also have audiovisual facilities. Its design was in charge of architect Maria Rossi, and will be steps away from the Molecular Sciences Building, which initial construction phase already started.

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