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Nature's retort to the dengue crisis

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Dengue, an arthropod borne viral disease has recently been considered as a global threat due to its dramatic resurgence and involvement of vast geographical areas, infecting about 2.5 billion people every year. Owing to its four closely related but antigenically distinct serotypes, an adequate drug or vaccine against dengue virus is not yet available. So far innumerable fruitless approaches have been tried for screening of compounds against this virus such as structure-based computational discovery and targeting of the viral enzymes. Due to an increasing trend in complementary and alternative medicine in the last few decades, researchers have come up with natural compounds which can be considered safer as compared to the synthetic drugs available for this condition. Several medicinal plant extracts such as *Psidium guava*, *Carica papaya*, *Euphorbia hirta*, etc., have been found to exhibit anti dengue activity through their wide spectrum of mechanisms of action such as inhibition of mRNA of the virus, stimulation of genes that code for platelet production, membrane-stabilizing property and protection of blood cells against stress-induced destruction. This review highlights the manifold natural options available at present to alleviate the symptoms & hasten the recovery in these patients, when given as an adjunct to the standard regimens.

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