

MELESTARIKAN KEARIFAN ETNOBOTANI MELALUI KENDURI SKO DUA LUHAH PENDUNG: PENDIDIKAN DAN PEMETAAN TUMBUHAN

*Preserving Ethnobotanical Wisdom through Kenduri Sko
Pendung: Education and Plant Mapping*

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Abstract

Kenduri Sko is one of the sacred traditional traditions of the people of Dua Luhah Pendung, Kerinci Regency, which is rich in cultural values and local knowledge, especially in the use of traditional plants. The ethnobotanical knowledge inherent in this ritual reflects local wisdom that has been passed down from generation to generation, but now faces challenges due to modernization and diminished interest of the younger generation. This community service activity aims to preserve ethnobotanical knowledge through participatory education and mapping of traditional plants used in Kenduri Sko. The methods used include interviews with indigenous and community leaders, documentation of plant types, and educational training for local youth and students. The results of the activity showed an increase in public awareness of the importance of local plant conservation as well as the formation of digital maps and simple catalogs of plants that play a role in traditional ceremonies. This program is expected to be the first step in maintaining the sustainability of local culture and biological resources as part of the ecological and social identity of the Kerinci people

Keywords— *Ethnobotany, Kenduri Sko, Local Wisdom, Traditional Plants, Cultural Conservation*

1. INTRODUCTION

Ethnobotanical knowledge is part of local wisdom that records the relationship between humans and plants in the cultural, social, and spiritual context of traditional societies. In many indigenous communities, plants are not only used as a source of food and medicine, but also have an important role in ritual practices, belief systems, and social structures (Mbelebele et al., 2024). This tradition develops through oral, symbols, and direct practice in everyday life. Therefore, ethnobotany is not only the science of plant utilization, but also a complex and contextual ecological knowledge system (Martin, 2004; Cotton, 1996). In various parts of the world, including Indonesia, which is rich in biodiversity and culture, ethnobotanical knowledge plays an important role in maintaining cultural resilience and environmental preservation (Sunkar et al., 2021). Local traditions such as the Kenduri Sko in Kerinci, which involves the use of various types of local plants in a series of rituals, are concrete examples of how the culture and ecological knowledge of the community run in harmony. However, modernization, changes in lifestyles, and the loss of interest of the younger generation threaten the sustainability of this knowledge. Therefore, documentation and education about ethnobotany in the context of local traditions is a strategic step in efforts to preserve culture as well as conserve natural resources (Albuquerque et al., 2011; Cunningham, 2001).

Plants have an important role in the lives of indigenous peoples, not only as a source of food and materials, but also as a central element in cultural structures and traditional knowledge systems. In various indigenous communities, plants are used as symbols in traditional ceremonies, media in conveying ancestral values, and markers of social and cultural identity. For example, certain leaves can symbolize fertility, strength, or purity in traditional rituals, and their use is done through a process that is sacred and passed down from generation to generation. This relationship shows that plants are not just biological entities, but have deep symbolic and spiritual meanings for indigenous communities (Turner, 2005; Posey, 1999). In addition to cultural aspects, plants also play an important role in the traditional medicine system of indigenous peoples. Various local species are used as medicines to cure physical ailments as well as psychological and spiritual disorders, with recipes that are passed down orally from shamans or traditional elders. The use of plants in spiritual contexts is also seen in the practice of purification, self-protection from negative energies, and reverence for ancestral spirits (Winiasri et al., 2023). The combination of empirical knowledge and spiritual belief in the use of plants shows the integration between the physical and metaphysical worlds in the living systems of indigenous peoples. Therefore, the preservation of this knowledge is not only related to the conservation of biodiversity, but also concerns the protection of intangible cultural heritage (Cox, 2000; WHO, 2013).

Kenduri Sko is the most sacred traditional ceremony in the indigenous people of Kerinci, Jambi Province, which represents the social structure, customary law, and spiritual relationship between humans, ancestors, and nature (La Rosa et al., 2021). This tradition is passed down from generation to generation and has high cultural value that reflects the life system of the local community. In its implementation, Kenduri Sko involves various cultural symbols, such as traditional clothing, mantras, and the use of local plants that have special meanings in rituals. The plants used are not only chosen based on aesthetic or

functional value, but also on symbolic and spiritual meaning, for example for cleansing, protection, or as offerings to ancestors. Thus, Kenduri Sko is a forum for the preservation of ethnobotanical knowledge that lives in the cultural practices of the Kerinci community (Syamsir, 2019; Afriyanti, 2022).

The ethnobotanical knowledge reflected in Kenduri Sko includes the introduction of plant types, the selection of plant parts, how to process them, and the context of their use in traditional rituals. This process shows the close ecological relationship between the people of Kerinci and their natural environment, where plants are not only used for physical needs but also to meet spiritual and cultural needs (Yulianti, 2020). However, modernization, changes in cultural values, and the decline of the younger generation's interest in customs mean that this knowledge is at risk of extinction if it is not immediately documented and transformed in a contextual form of education. Therefore, it is important to make Kenduri Sko an entry point in efforts to preserve ethnobotany and strengthen local cultural identity, through collaboration between indigenous peoples, academics, and cultural preservation institutions (Nasution et al., 2021; Wahyuningsih, 2023).

The preservation of ethnobotanical knowledge in the tradition of Kenduri Sko dua luhah Pendung Kerinci faces serious challenges in the modernization era. The shift in cultural values due to the influence of urban lifestyles and globalization has led to a decline in the interest of the younger generation in indigenous heritage, including knowledge of local plants (Rahayu et al., 2025). Information that was previously passed on orally from traditional elders to the next generation is now in danger of being lost due to a lack of documentation and a lack of space for cross-generational cultural interaction. The modernization of education that does not provide space for local wisdom also contributes to the disconnection of the chain of inheritance of ethnobotanical knowledge (Gómez-Baggethun et al., 2010).

In addition, land conversion is an ecological factor that exacerbates this knowledge preservation crisis. The conversion of customary forests into monoculture farmland, commercial plantations, or residential areas leads to the loss of natural habitats of plants that have cultural value in traditional rituals (Söukand et al., 2024). This environmental degradation not only threatens biodiversity, but also reduces people's access to biological resources that have been an important part of cultural practices such as Kenduri Sko. Without integrated and participatory conservation efforts, both from local communities and stakeholders, the ethnobotanical knowledge stored in this tradition is at risk of slowly becoming extinct (Berkes et al., 2000).

Community Service by Albuquerque et al. (2011) highlights the role of local knowledge in biodiversity conservation and cultural resilience, especially in the context of indigenous communities that have a strong attachment to nature. Meanwhile, Community Service by Suliartini et al. (2020) in Bali shows that community involvement in mapping traditional ceremonial plants is able to increase ecological awareness and strengthen cultural identity. At the national level, a study by Fadli et al. (2019) examined the use of plants in the traditional rituals of the Minangkabau people, and found that documentation of this knowledge is indispensable as a form of mitigation against the extinction of oral culture. These studies show that an educational and participatory approach in documenting ethnobotanical knowledge is an effective strategy in preserving local wisdom.

2. METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a participatory ethnography method, which aims to explore in depth the meaning, use, and preservation of traditional plants in the context of the traditional ceremony of Kenduri Sko Dua Luhah Pendung Kerinci. Data collection techniques were carried out through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and visual documentation. The Community Service informants included traditional leaders, local religious leaders, community elders, as well as women and indigenous youth who were directly involved in the implementation of the Sko Feast. Field data is focused on identifying the types of plants used in the ritual, their processing and use, as well as the symbolic value contained in the practice. The Community Serviceers also noted the cultural narrative and spiritual significance that accompany the use of each plant as part of the ethnobotanical knowledge that lives in the community.

In addition to cultural documentation, this study also utilizes participatory mapping methods to record the location and distribution of traditional plants used in Kenduri Sko. This activity involves local communities in the process of identifying, classifying, and mapping plants through transect techniques and community mapping. The mapping results are converted into digital and printed catalogs as educational and conservation materials. To support the education process, the Community Serviceer also organized workshops and focus group discussions (FGD) aimed at the younger generation, with the hope of building cross-generational awareness of the importance of preserving ethnobotanical knowledge. Data analysis was carried out by means of reduction, categorization, and thematic interpretation in accordance with a qualitative approach, in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of cultural and ecological dynamics in the preservation of traditional plant knowledge of the Kerinci community.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study successfully documented 23 species of local plants used in various stages of the Kenduri Sko traditional ceremony in the Dua Luhah Pendung area, Kerinci Regency. These plants have an important role both practically and symbolically in the cultural structure of the local community. Identification was carried out through field observations, in-depth interviews with traditional elders, and group discussions with indigenous people who were directly involved in the ritual. Each plant has a specific function in the ritual, ranging from treatment, symbolizing purity, to being a mandatory element in offerings (Fakchich & Elachouri, 2023). From the classification results, these plants can be grouped into four main categories based on their function of use, namely medicinal plants, fragrant plants, symbolic/spiritual plants, and complementary plants for traditional offerings. Medicinal plants are used to support the physical health of the participants in the ceremony and for traditional medicine before or after the ritual is performed. Fragrant plants function to provide a distinctive aroma to the place where the ceremony is held and symbolize purity. Meanwhile, symbolic plants and offerings have a spiritual role in honoring ancestors and asking for protection. One example of a commonly used plant is the betel leaf (*Piper betle*), which serves as a symbol of respect and purity, and must be present in traditional guest reception ceremonies. Other plants such as cinnamon (*Cinnamomum burmannii*) and sembung leaves (*Blumea balsamifera*) are used in the procession of purifying the room and burning incense, because they are believed to be able to ward off evil spirits and bring positive energy. Meanwhile, ginger (*Curcuma xanthorrhiza*) is

used in the form of herbal medicine to maintain the stamina and physical strength of traditional leaders who lead rituals. In addition, there are also plants such as turmeric, lemongrass, and kantil flowers that are used in offerings and rituals to summon ancestral spirits dapat dilihat pada Tabel 1.

Table 1. Classification and Function of Traditional Plants in Kenduri Sko Dua Luhah Pendung

No	Scientific Name	Nama Ilmiah	Main Functions	Uses in the Kenduri Sko Ritual
1	Daun sirih	<i>Piper betle</i>	Simbolik/Spiritual	Traditional offerings, guest honors, symbols of purity
2	Kayu manis	<i>Cinnamomum burmannii</i>	Pewangi/Spiritual	Burned as incense, cleanses the sacred space
3	Daun sembung	<i>Blumea balsamifera</i>	Pewangi/Obat	Burned for scent, exorcising evil spirits
4	Temulawak	<i>Curcuma xanthorrhiza</i>	Obat	Traditional herbal medicine for the stamina of elders and traditional leaders
5	Serai wangi	<i>Cymbopogon nardus</i>	Pewangi	Dicampur air cuci tangan/tubuh sebelum ritual
6	Kunyit	<i>Curcuma longa</i>	Obat/Sesaji	Complementary dishes to offerings, a symbol of fertility
7	Bunga kantil	<i>Michelia alba</i>	Simbolik/Spiritual	Ornaments of offerings, symbols of ancestral spirits and purity
8	Akar alang-alang	<i>Imperata cylindrica</i>	Obat/Spiritual	Spiritual cleansers, repelling rituals
9	Daun pandan	<i>Pandanus amaryllifolius</i>	Pewangi/Pelengkap	Food fragrance and ceremony room
10	Bawang putih	<i>Allium sativum</i>	Obat/Sesaji	Food fragrance and ceremony room
11	Jahe	<i>Zingiber officinale</i>	Obat	Body warmer and herbal drink complement
12	Daun keladi	<i>Colocasia esculenta</i>	Simbolik	As a sacrificial base, a symbol of protection and fertility
13	Bunga melati	<i>Jasminum sambac</i>	Simbolik	Used in offerings as a symbol of purity and pure love
14	Buah pinang	<i>Areca catechu</i>	Simbolik/Tradisional	Paired with betel leaves in traditional greetings
15	Daun limau	<i>Citrus hystrix</i>	Pewangi/Pembersih	The soaking water is used to wash oneself before the ceremony.
16	Daun jambu	<i>Psidium guajava</i>	Obat	Diarrhea medicine, used for treatment before the ceremony
17	Biji pala	<i>Myristica fragrans</i>	Pewangi/Sesaji	Air freshener, complementary to ritual food

18	Daun salam	<i>Syzygium polyanthum</i>	Pewangi/Obat	Cooking spices, believed to bring blessings
19	Lengkuas	<i>Alpinia galanga</i>	Obat/Pelengkap Sesaji	Ritual cooking ingredients and flavor enhancers in offerings
20	Bunga kenanga	<i>Cananga odorata</i>	Simbolik/Pewangi	Sowing flowers, symbols of purity and connection with ancestors
21	Daun kunyit hitam	<i>Curcuma aeruginosa</i>	Obat/Spiritual	Used in spiritual cleansing by indigenous leaders
22	Akar pasak bumi	<i>Eurycoma longifolia</i>	Obat	Adult male physical enhancer, consumed before ritual
23	Daun manggis	<i>Garcinia mangostana</i>	Obat/Simbolik	The boiled water is used in purification and cleansing rituals

Table 1. Explaining that there are 23 types of plants used in the feast ceremony of the Dua Luhah Pendung Kerinci school. These findings underscore the importance of documenting local plants in cultural contexts, as each species is not only used for practical purposes but also contains symbolic values that reinforce the identity of the community. The fact that most of the knowledge about these plants is only owned by elders and has not been systematically documented suggests that preservation through educational approaches and participatory mapping is indispensable. The results of the catalogs and maps produced from this Community Service are expected to be a source of cross-generational learning as well as the basis for the development of plant conservation based on local culture (Oktarina et al., 2021]; Santosa & Aprilisia, 2022).

Symbolic Meaning and Plant Culture

Plants in the Kenduri Sko Dua Luhah Pendung traditional ceremony not only function as physical supporting elements, but also contain deep symbolic and spiritual meanings for the Kerinci community. Each plant used in the traditional ritual is selected based on sacred values, which have been passed down through oral tradition. For example, betel leaves (*Piper betle*) and areca nuts (*Areca catechu*) are used in welcoming traditional guests as a symbol of respect and openness, reflecting the philosophy of life of the indigenous community that upholds good manners and etiquette (Dean, 2024). In each stage of the Kenduri Sko ceremony, plants play different roles according to the context of the ritual being carried out. At the stage of purifying the place of the ceremony and ritual tools, lemongrass, sembung leaves, and lime leaves are used as spiritual cleansing materials. Meanwhile, at the stage of offering offerings to ancestors, plants such as kantil flowers, jasmine, and kenanga are arranged as symbols of the presence of holy spirits and symbols of pure love. In the closing stage, the use of temulawak, ginger, and turmeric in the form of herbal medicine signifies the hope for blessings and physical and spiritual resilience for the traditional leaders (Adinugraha et al., 2024).

The cultural values inherent in the use of plants in Kenduri Sko are also reflected in the oral narratives of the community. For example, there is a belief that the roots of alang-alang (*Imperata cylindrica*) have the power to ward off disaster and are often used in rituals to neutralize negative energy. In local beliefs, plants are not just biological objects, but have a "spirit" or natural power that can interact

with humans (Ridwan et al., 2022). Therefore, every use of plants in Kenduri Sko must be accompanied by sincere intentions and carried out in a sacred atmosphere. Oral tradition plays an important role in transmitting the meaning and function of each plant. Knowledge about how to pick certain leaves at certain times, process plants into medicine or incense, to how to arrange them in offerings is passed down from the elders through stories, proverbs, and direct practice. Unfortunately, amidst social change and modernization, these narratives are starting to disappear because they are no longer part of the daily lives of the younger generation. This indicates that plants as cultural symbols need documentation and regeneration through an educational and participatory approach (Kadir et al., 2022). Thus, plants in Kenduri Sko not only represent the relationship between humans and nature, but also strengthen the spiritual ties of the community with ancestors and invisible forces. Preserving the symbolic meaning of plants is an important part of preserving the cultural identity of indigenous communities. Through participatory mapping, documentation of oral narratives, and integration of cultural values in local education, communities can maintain the sustainability of this knowledge as a living and dynamic heritage in the Kerinci cultural landscape.'

Inheritance of Knowledge Between Generations

Ethnobotanical knowledge in the indigenous people of Kerinci, especially in the Dua Luhah Pendung area, is an integral part of the collective cultural and belief system that has been going on for centuries. However, the inheritance of this knowledge has experienced a significant decline, mainly due to the generation gap (Kinyili & Ndunda, 2023). This study found that older age groups, especially traditional elders and ceremonial leaders, have a deep understanding of the type, function, and symbolic meaning of each plant used in the Kenduri Sko ceremony. Meanwhile, most of the younger generation is no longer familiar with the function of these plants, and they cannot even distinguish the types of plants that are the main elements in traditional rituals. This difference in knowledge level is influenced by changes in the lifestyle of the younger generation who are more connected to the digital world and formal education that emphasizes less on the aspect of local wisdom. The lack of direct interaction between the young generation and cultural practices makes the traditional learning process — which has been carried out through observation, active participation, and oral narratives — hampered. As a result, there is a disconnection of the knowledge chain which has the potential to cause the loss of ethnobotanical information that is of high value both ecologically and culturally. The shape of plants and offerings in the sko feast can be seen in figure 1.



Figure 1. Plants and Offerings of the Sko Duo Luhah Pendung Kenduri Ceremony

One of the main reasons for the decline in the sustainability of this knowledge is the lack of written documentation that records the types of plants and their use in the context of traditional rituals. So far, this knowledge has been oral and only lives in the collective memory of the traditional elders. Without systematic recording in the form of books, catalogs, or digital media, this information is very vulnerable to loss as the number of people who master it decreases. In addition, the formal education system in the area has not integrated local wisdom as part of the school learning curriculum (Tito & Carvalho e Silva, 2021). Furthermore, the absence of a formal learning system that incorporates ethnobotanical knowledge as part of local cultural education exacerbates the situation. Schools tend to focus on national general materials (Apriliandani, 2025), and little space is provided for the exploration of local cultures. This creates a gap between knowledge that is considered "modern" and local knowledge that actually has great potential for environmental education and sustainable development. Therefore, there needs to be an integrative effort to bridge the formal education system with the cultural practices of indigenous peoples. If not taken seriously, ethnobotanical knowledge which is an integral part of the cultural identity of the Kerinci people is at great risk of extinction (Rahmadi, 2025). The disconnection of the flow of knowledge transfer from the older generation to the younger generation not only has an impact on the loss of information about plants and their functions, but also weakens the social structure, spiritual values, and ecological ties of society with its environment. In the context of climate change and environmental degradation today (Jon et al., 2023), this loss of knowledge would be a great loss not only for local communities, but also for national cultural richness. Preservation efforts must be carried out through an educational, participatory, and knowledge digitization approach (Dewanto et al., 2024; Santosa et al., 2025; Wantu et al., 2024; Zulyusri et al., 2023). The involvement of the younger generation in plant documentation and mapping, community-based ethnobotanical training, and the integration of local curricula that contain indigenous wisdom are important strategies that need to be developed. In addition, the development of visual media and digital technology can be a bridge to transfer traditional knowledge in a format that is more familiar to the current generation. Thus, the inheritance of ethnobotanical knowledge can be maintained and strengthened as part of sustainable development based on local culture (Apra et al., 2021; Rahman et al., 2023).

4. CONCLUSION

The results of this study show that the ethnobotanical knowledge contained in the implementation of the traditional ceremony of Kenduri Sko Dua Luhah Pendung has high cultural, spiritual, and ecological value. Through the participatory identification and mapping process, it was found that a number of local plants such as betel leaves, cinnamon, temulawak, and cantil flowers play an important role in various stages of the ritual. The function of plants is not only limited to physical materials, but also as a symbol of protection, respect for ancestors, and intermediaries in human relations with nature and spirituality. The preservation of this knowledge is important to maintain the sustainability of the cultural identity of the indigenous people of Kerinci in the midst of modernization and environmental changes. However, the results of the study also reveal a generational gap in the understanding and inheritance of this knowledge, exacerbated by the lack of written documentation and the lack of integration of ethnobotanical values in the formal education system. Therefore, strategic efforts are needed involving cross-generational education, digitization of information, and

strengthening the role of local communities in preserving cultural wisdom. This approach not only aims to preserve plants and traditions, but also strengthens collective awareness of the importance of local values as the foundation of culture-based sustainable development. This Community Service makes a real contribution to the community-based conservation agenda and the revitalization of local culture that is adaptive to the challenges of the times.

5. SUGGESTION

This study recommends that indigenous peoples and local governments work together in documenting ethnobotanical knowledge related to Kenduri Sko.

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