

## **The Place of Medicinal & Ornamental Plants in attracting Tourists to Fars Province (Iran)**

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### **Abstract**

*Demand and desire for tourism with various incentives for the purposes of recreation, pilgrimage, and business, are increasing in the entire world with an incredibly speed. The rise of income levels, increased leisure time, changes in attitudes toward new concepts of life and the needs to international communication require that tourism to be developed. In terms of tourism attractions, Iran is considered as one of the world's most important tourist countries. The variety of attractions such as historical, natural, cultural, rural, and urban attractions around the land are the proof of this claim. In this regard, taking into consideration natural tourism potentials as well as positive and negative function of these attractions in health affairs and preserving the beauty of human life could encompass an important dimension of tourism by medical approach. In this regard, ornamental and medicinal plants and realizing their properties in maintaining health and welfare of the citizens of a community could have a greatest role in attracting tourist to the country. In the present study, having conducted a case study with analytical-descriptive approach on Fars province of Iran and doing extensive library and field study; while identifying and introducing plant species, especially ornamental and medicinal plants of the region, it is attempted to analyze multiple angles and functional aspects of these plants in maintaining community health and welfare, especially tourists, to attract tourists to this province.*

**Keywords:** *Tourism, health tourism, ornamental and medicinal plants, Fars province, Iran*

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### **Introduction**

In the new world, diversifying the economy and raising human development indices, resolving the problems caused by industrialization, the cities' over standard pollution, increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of human resources, employment, cultures interactions, environment conservation, and in general, sustainable development are concerns that the present world is facing. Each country, at every level of development, is trying to resolve these issues. Meanwhile, the countries that have turned to economic diversification are willing to set themselves free of single-base economy; they are seeking to identify potentials and generate new benefits of development, and have been more successful than other countries. One of these components is "the expansion of tourism industry and the most countries which benefit from the advantages because of their location, have included it in their national development plan, so that, in this way, they would be able to accelerate and develop their own national development process" (Chuck, 2004: 23). In the framework of land use planning projects, including national, regional and local, tourism industry is considered as one of the important tools and components of development and poverty eradication among human settlements (Sabagh Kermani, 2001: 300).

Tourism and recreation are based on the concept of a desirable destination. Nature, culture and human capital are the key assets for making a tourist destination desirable. The WTO defines sustainable tourism as Tourism, which meets the needs of present tourists, and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future. [1: 2004]

Its high growth and development rates, considerable volumes of foreign currency inflows, infrastructure development, and introduction of new management and educational experience actively affect various sectors of economy, which positively contribute to the social and economic development of the country as a whole.

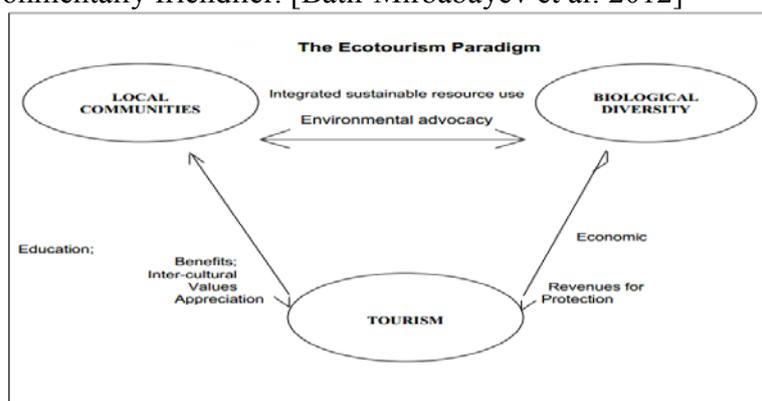
Here are possible positive effects of tourism:

- Developing positive attitudes towards each other
- Learning about each other's culture and customs
- Reducing negative perceptions and stereotypes

- Developing friendships
- Developing pride, appreciation, understanding, respect, and tolerance for each other's culture
- Increasing self-esteem of hosts and tourists
- Psychological satisfaction with interaction

Therefore, social contacts between tourists and local people may result in mutual appreciation, understanding, tolerance, awareness, learning, family bonding respect, and liking. Residents are educated about the outside world without leaving their homes, while their visitors significantly learn about a distinctive culture. Local communities benefit through contribution by tourism to the improvement of the social infrastructure like schools, libraries, health care institutions, internet cafes, and so on. Besides, if local culture is the base for attracting tourists to the region, it helps to preserve the local traditions and handicrafts, which maybe were on the link of the extinction. Tourism has the power to affect cultural change. While presenting a culture to tourists may help preserve the culture, it can also dilute or even destroy it. The point is to promote tourism in the region so that it would both give incomes and create respect for the local tradition and culture.

From the ecological point of view tourism is often more acceptable and preferable than any other industrial production, as it is environmentally friendlier. [Batir Mirbabayev et al: 2012]



**The ecotourism paradigm [Batir Mirbabayev et al: 2012]**

All the three elements (tourism, local communities and biological diversity) in this model are in co-interaction. Local communities use

the natural resources but they also protect them. Tourists come to enjoy the nature and get knowledge about it, but they also can pollute and destroy it, or on the other side help to protect it by drawing attention to unique natural resources in the area. Local communities affect tourists by giving them knowledge of their culture and way of life. [Batir Mirbabayev et al: 2012].

In this regard, the indigenous people of each region have used these plants for the treatment of physical and mental diseases. Introducing these regions and cultures, and their use of medicinal and aromatic plants will help to provide tourism attraction for non-native people, to educate and inform people about the natural values of the region and the necessity of preserving them and also economic prosperity of the region. Educating new generation is of great importance for the preservation of nature and culture of the region for the coming years. Color and aroma of medicinal plants, as a part of nature, bring diversity and beauty to the landscape and provides a place for tourists' relaxation and outdoor recreation. For this purpose, the present study has attempted to identify and introduce various medicinal and ornamental plants in Fars province in order to attract tourism with the emphasis on valuation, recognition and analysis of the benefits of medicinal plants in Iran. Finally, by analyzing and introducing functional aspects, especially health and medical dimensions of such plants, we will be able to provide the grounds for attracting tourists to the region.

#### **Theoretical Framework:**

##### **Medicinal Properties of Medicinal & Aromatic Plants:**

About 80% of the populations of many developing countries still use traditional medicines for their health care. Modern pharmacopoeia still contains at least of 25% drugs derived from plants and many others, which are synthetic analogues, built on prototype compounds isolated from plants. The worldwide reliance on plant medicines becomes a concern as the reality of bio-diversity loss enters the picture. In the United States, some 25 percent of prescriptions are filled with drugs whose active ingredients are extracted or derived from plants. [Carly Leusner : 2008]

In addition to their physical health, medicinal and aromatic plants have an effective role in mental health. One of the methods used in the treatment of mental illnesses is aromatherapy. Aromatherapy is the technique of using volatile plant oil, including essential oils, for psychological and physical health. Aromatherapy is used to relieve pain, anxiety, depression, insomnia, fatigue, asthma, and even self-confidence, success and creativity. Several studies in the area of mental health have shown that using aromatherapy has a positive effect on human emotion. Since at least 60% of the doctors' visits are due to stress-related problems, inhaler aromatherapy could be effective in decreasing stress [H.Alavi Majd et al, 2010].

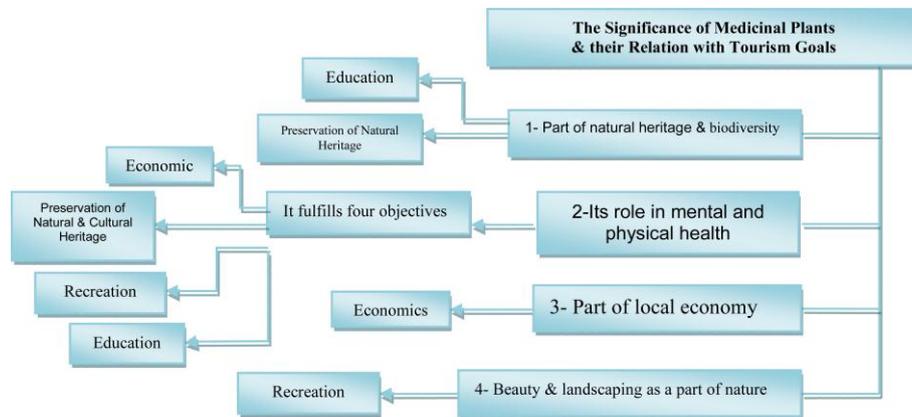
Aromatic plants play an important role in this type of treatment.

Using plants to heal our bodies also serves to restore ecological health. According to Scott, plant medicines help "enhance biodiversity," which is valuable for our communities, gardens and farms, "the more diverse our ecosystems, the healthier we are."

Plant medicine and plant education work cyclically to promote health for people and their ecological niches. [Carly Leusner: 2008]

The issue of bio-diversity loss is one that affects the entire globe, thus medicinal plant education is an issue relevant to both children at the local school and visiting tourists.

Engaging individuals from outside the community raises awareness of real, current issues that affect indigenous communities. For the volunteers, the medicine served as a representation of indigenous life, and therefore the way in which the tourists understood the medicine, is directly related to the way they view the culture of their hosts [Carly Leusner: 2008].



**Diagram of the Role of Medicinal Herbs in Meeting Tourism Goals (Authors, 2012)**

**Introducing the area under study:**

Fars province has been located in the south of Iran (between the northern latitude of 27° 3' to 21° 43'). This province, with an area of about 14 million hectares, is divided into dry and semi-tropical climate, Irano-turanian climate, including steppe and semi-steppe zones, dry forests and high mountains. Four hundred and eighty- three medicinal plants from 94 families have been collected and identified, together with their health benefits [Iraj Javidtash, 2001]. From five phytogeographical zones in Iran, three zones including Zagroussian, Irano-Turanian, and Persian Gulf and Omani zones could be found in this province [S.K. Bordbar et al, 2010]. The form of growth of medicinal plants in the province is diverse. Species, whose growth depend s on the annual rainfall, could not be introduced as the major potential for tourism attraction, but they work as a supplement besides tree and shrub species in wet years.

- Table of medicinal plants and native byproducts as the index of the province, which has made the export of the province: [Iraj Javidtash, 2001]

**Table 1: Introducing and identifying various medicinal and ornamental plants in Fars province [Iraj Javidtash, 2001]**

No.	Scientific Name	Family	Used Part	Growth Form
1	Amygdalus Scoparia	Rosaceae	Fruit	Shrub
2	Astragalus Spp.	Papilionaceae	Gum	Shrub
3	Echinops Spp.	Compositae	Manna	Herbaceous
4	Ferula Assa-foetida L.	Umbelliferae	Gum	Bush
5	Ferulla gumosa Boiss	Umbelliferae	Gum	Bush
6	Glycyrrhiza glabra L.	Papilionaceae	Root Extract & Powder	Herbaceous Perennial
7	Matricaria chamomilla L.	Compositae	Flower	Herbaceous
8	Myrtus communis L.	Myrtaceae	Leave	Shrub
9	Plantago Spp.	Plantaginaceae	Fruit	Herbaceous
10	Plantago psyllium L.	Plantaginaceae	Fruit	Pasture
11	Pseudo alhagi	Popilionaceae	Manna	Herbaceous
12	Pistacia mutica F.M	Anacardiaceae	Fruit & Vegetable Juice	Tree
13	Phoenix dactylifera L.	Palmaceae	Spathe	Tree
14	Prangos Spp.	Apiaceae	Leave	Herbaceous
15	Quercus brantii	Fagaceae	Acorn Skin	Tree
16	L. Rhus coriaria	Anacardiaceae	Fruit	Shrub
17	Rosa damaescena L.	Rosaceae	Flower	Shrub
18	Sisymbrium officinale Scor.	Cruciferae	Fruit	Pasture
19	Sisymbrium Sophia L.	Cruciferae	Fruit	Herbaceous
	Zataria multiflora Boiss.	Labiatae	Leave	Shrub

In addition to the above medicinal plants, other plants such as narcissus, Austrian biar rose, and desert teak, due to their importance in Fars province, have been also considered in this study.

### **Research Findings & Discussion:**

Some species are widely grown in some parts of the province, but the emphasis of the study is on the plants, which are outstanding in the

province or country due to different reasons and have a high density in one place. Moreover, in case they are self-propelled, climate changes do not have any effect on their growth or their growth and reproduction conditions are favorable (orange and Persian Rose gardens). Therefore, less emphasis has been paid to plants, which are dependent on annual rainfall and we cannot certainly mention the season for tourist's attendance, so trees and shrubs are in priority. Among the species of the province eight species, which has the potential for tourists' attraction, have been selected (table 2).

**Table 2: Plants, which attract tourists in Fars province (authors: 2012)**

Picture	Growth form	Family	English Name	Scientific Name	No
	Tree	Rutaceae	Sour orange	Citrus Aurantium	1
	Bush	Amaryllidaceae	Narcis	Narcissus sp.	2
	Tree	Palmaceae	Date palm	phoenix dactyliferal	3
	Tree	Anacardiaceae	Turk terebinth pistache	Pistacia atlantica	4

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	Tree	Fagaceae	Oak tree	Quercus brantii L.	5
	Shrub	Rosaceae	Persian rose	Rosa damascene Mill	6
	Shrub	Rosaceae	Austrian briar rose	Rosa feotida	7
	Tree	Bignoniaceae	Desert Teak	Tecomella undulata (Roxb.) Seem.	8

**1- Narcissus:**

Narcissus with scientific name of *Narcissus* sp. is from Amaryllidaceae family. Narcissus is a flower indigenous to Iran, it is aromatic and is considered as one of the important and ornamental flowers of the country. In addition to its commercial usage, this flower as flower is planted in home gardens and parks. This plant naturally blossoms in fall and early winter when few plants bloom [M. Chehrazi et al, 2007]. Narcissus fields around Kazeroon are the major area of Narcissus cultivation in Fars province. Due to economic significance of scent of flowers in perfumery industry, research on chemical compounds of flowers' scent has been started many years ago. The

essence of narcissus species has a very high value in perfumery industry [F. Nakhaei et al, 2008].

### **2- Desert Teak (*Tecomella undulate* (Roxb.) Seem.):**

Desert Teak (*Tecomella undulate* (Roxb.) Seem.) , it is a plant with the height of 3 to 15m and it s from Bignoniaceae family, and the only native species of this family is in the south of Iran including Fars province. Desert Teak is a woody plant in semi-arid areas and has beautiful and pomegranate shape flowers in yellowish orange, red, and orange in spring. It is a plant resistant to drought and even in the years with no rainfall, it blooms. Due to unawareness of native people of medicinal and environmental benefits of this plant, and good quality of some land, where it grows, for farming, they are in the process of destruction and extinction. This plant is resistant to fire and can be used as windbreak in south windy areas [S.Mohsenzadeh et al, 2010].

*Tecomella undulata* (Family, Bignoniaceae) is commonly known as ammora (in English) or Rohida and is locally known as honey tree, desert teak, marwar teak or white cedar. *Tecomella undulata* gained prominence due to the presence of secondary metabolites with therapeutic potentials. Traditionally, it is extensively used for treatment of several diseases like liver, spleen, internal tumours, and diseases of abdomen, wound healing, conjunctivitis, hepatosplenomegaly, blood purifier, syphilis, gonorrhoea and rewarding in hepatitis. Pharmacological studies have reported its Anti-HIV, Antibacterial Activity, analgesic and anti inflammatory, antioxidants, hepatoprotective [Mahendra Jain, 2012].

It has been distributed in different regions of the province including Khonj, Alamarvdasht, between Khonj and Ghir (Abgarm), between Ghir & Jahrom, GHir (Heram) [V.Mozafarian: 2005]. However, it is seen in great quantity and density in Khorab village of Farashband.

### **3- Persian Rose (*Rosa damascene* Mill):**

Iran was the main producer of rose oil until the 16th century and exported it to all over the world [Mahmoodreza Moein et al., 2010].

In the past, the main center of aromatic plants of Iran has been Fars province [M. Honarvar et al, 2008]. Persian rose (*Rosa damascene* Mill) is one of the most important aromatic species, which is grown in different climatic conditions. The consumable part of this plant is its

flowers, which are used in different forms as rose water, jam, and dried flowers in food. The essential oil of Persian rose is used in aromatherapy, cosmetic and perfumery industries. The essential oil, rose water, and dried flower are the products, which are now exported abroad in addition to its domestic usage [M.B.Rezaei et al., 2004]. The exported products include: essential oils such as firm essential oils, absolute essential oils - viscous soluble oils, essential oils, fragrant distilled waters, and aqueous solutions of essential oils - jams, fruit jelly, marmalades, and products that are associated with cooking - dried flower, cut flower, natural dried flower, handicraft dried flower, dried red rose, rose bud, types of flower, dried petal and apartment plant [M. Khodaei et al., 2006].

Damascus rose is a plant with little expectation which grows in various and harsh weather conditions such as poor soil, low water and high slope [M. Honarvar et. al, 2008].

The most distribution of *R. damascena* is located around Darab and Meymand in Fars province, respectively [Mahmoodreza Moein et al, 2010].

#### **4- Date Palm (*Phoenix dactylifera*):**

Date is of garden products that are adapted to weather conditions in southern and central parts of Iran. Fars province is considered as one of the most important centers of date production in Iran, so that in the farming year 2006-2007, production of different varieties of date in the country has been 996772 tons and the share of Fars province has been 127943 tons - about 13% of the country's total production- [M. Estakhr et. al, 210]. Jahrom city in Fars province is the largest producer of date. The production yield in Jahrom region is 1.8 times more than other regions of Iran. In this area, 30 different varieties of date are cultivated and Shahani date makes 95% of the products of this region [M. Emadzadeh et al., 2002].

Since different parts of date palm tree (*Phoenix dactylifera*) have numerous benefits and fundamental role in human health, it can be used as a suitable food. Heart of date palm (Palmito), which make stem cells of palm tree, is edible buds on top of date palm tree and new bunches of its fruit are gone out of it. The heart of date palm is often obtained more from young trees (4-5 years old). Based on the

conducted studies, it has been shown that the fruit of palm tree in the form of decoction, infusion, syrups, or paste is useful for sore throat, cold, fever and some other problems [A. Movahed et al, 2011]. The date palm fiber has been an interesting material for human from the past; it has been used for strengthening construction materials, making rope and producing various handicrafts. It can be used as reinforcing and filler in composite products by pretreatment and preparing cellulose fibers from it [H. Ghafarzadeh Zare et al., 2011]. The spathe water is obtained from date palm inflorescence sheath, which is also called "Chemcheme". Therapeutic properties of the spathe (inflorescence sheath) include lowering blood lipid, increasing breast milk, acting as analgesic and tranquilizer, sedative, relieving joint pain and treatment of rheumatic diseases, and the resolution of diarrhea and stomach cramps. Rubbing its paste on the gum will strengthen it and remove pus and sanies from it [M. H. Dashti Rahmat Abadi et al., 2012].

#### **5- Austrian Biar Rose (*Rosa foetida*)**

*Rosa* species are distributed throughout the temperate and sub-tropical regions of the northern hemisphere [L. SAMIEI et al, 2010].

*Rosa foetida* is a beautiful shrub of Rosaceae with ornamental and medicinal value [ Ghasem Mohammadi-Nejad et al, 2011]. As a beautiful resistant shrub, yellow rose has been originated from Iran [F. Ebrahimi, 2010]. This species has been traditionally used in folk medicines to treat several disorders such as healing scurvy, healing heart diseases [ Ghasem Mohammadi-Nejad et al, 2011].

It is an important plant in rose water industry, which is enriched of vitamin C and is used in healing scurvy. It is useful as a sedative. It is also used in healing digestive and skin diseases. The fruits of the plant are useful in fixing muscular pains and the plant has an anti-parasite effect in its crude form. The provinces of Kordestan, Fars and Kerman in Iran have the climate appropriate for growing yellow rose [F. Ebrahimi, 2010].

It is used in healing digestive and skin diseases, its fruits are useful in fixing muscular pains and its crude form has an anti-parasite effect [ Ghasem Mohammadi-Nejad et al, 2011].

*R. foetida Persiana*, this is the rose that was much later to introduce the colour yellow and all its subsequent variations to the modern rose, as we know it today (Pernetiana roses, the first of which was “Soleil d’Or” by J. PernetDucher). To this day *R. persica* intrigues breeders with its chestnut blotches. It was introduced to France from Iran in 1788, and soon after to England by Sir Joseph Banks in 1790 [Doug Grant, 2009].

Its most density is in Barih Mountain, near Estahban, Fars province [V. Mozafarian, 2005]. It is also seen in Layzangan area.

#### **6- Sour Orange (Citrus Aurantium)**

*Citrus Aurantium* is planted in order to use of its flower for making jam, taking sour orange flower water and using sour orange juice as flavoring [V. Mozafarian, 2005]. Sour orange (*Citrus Aurantium* l.) is one of the most widely used indigenous medicinal plants of Iran. The flowers of the plant had been used in the treatment of neurological diseases such as hysteria, epilepsy, and neurasthenia in traditional medicine of Iran. Moreover, this plant has been known as sedative, tranquilizer and appetizer and it can relieve heart palpitation [Gh. R. Shabanian et al, 2009]. The main places for planting sour orange in Fars province are Jahrom and Darab cities. Iranians especially people residing in Fars province are interested in sour orange so much so that they planted it in their houses, streets and boulevards; also, it is among the major and important trees in historical gardens of the province.

#### **7- Oak Tree (Quercus brantii L.)**

Oak tree is the dominant and slow-growing species in the Southern Zagros zone forests in Fars province, which includes about 291000 hectares of the forests of Fars province. Persian oak tree, regardless of geographical restriction, is often scattered in all areas, and it has a good expansion due to its special tolerance to harsh conditions [M. Hesami et al., 2010]. The extension of Persian oak tree in Fars province starts from northwest of the province and its border with Khuzestan and Kohgiluyeh & Boyerahmad provinces and reaches Chenar Sookhte village, the suburb of Firoozabad county. In view of altitudinal distribution, Persian oak tree spread at altitude of 900 to 2400m above sea level [S. K. Bprdbar et al, 2010].

Different researchers have reported anti-inflammatory, anti-diabetic, antibacterial and antiviral properties of some species of oak such as Persian oak tree, Holly hock (*Quercus ilex*), and *Quercus infectoria*. The oak species belongs to Fagaceae family. Shell of oak fruit is used as anti-diarrhea in traditional medicine. The fruit content of the oak tree is edible, and natives make special muffins with flour taken from that [M. Taran et al., 2010]. Its distribution in Fars province is between Bushehr and Shiraz, 5km. east of Miankotal, 37km. north of Kazeroon, between Shiraz and Kazeroon, Ghebleh mountain at the north of Kazeroon, near Khanezenyan, and Koohdasht, west of Kazeroon [V. Mozafarian, 2005]. There is a great density of this tree in regions such as Kamfirooz, Kohmareh Sorkhi of Shiraz, Mashayekh of Mamasani, Javdi in Mamasani, Dasht Barm in Dashtarzhan, Kotal Dokhtar & Pirezan in Dashtarzhan because of high rate of rainfall in these regions.

#### **8- Turk Terebinth Pistache (*Pistacia atlantica*)**

Turk Terebinth pistache is one of the medicinal plants. Iran is one of the two main centers of *Pistacia* diversity (wild pistachio from Anacardiaceae family that is adapted to arid and semi-arid regions) and the main producer of pistachios in the world [Gh. M. Hanafi et al., 2012]. Terebinth, as an adaptable tree to different climatic regions, has ever had high ecological and economic value. Although, the species of *Pistacia atlantica* subsp. *mutica* does not have timber wood due to being located in arid and semi-arid regions of the country, but because of its seed and terbinthine which are economic is one of the few species that can be considered [S. K. Bordbar et al, 2006]. Natives for making a kind of local food also use its seed.

*Pistacia atlantica* is of xerophyte species in Irano-Turanian zone. The largest areas of its habitat are respectively at altitudes of 1000-1500m, 1500-2000m [M. R. Negahdar-Saber, 2010]. Its distribution in Fars province is between Jahrom and Mansourabad (Jooyom), Farak, south of Neyriz Lake, between Sarjanganl & Sarvestan, between Persepolis and Moosakhan mountain, Khanezenyan, Bill mountain, Koohdasht, Kazeroon, between Eghlid and Dahgerdoo [V. Mozafarian, 2005]. The areas of high density of that exist in Arsanjan, Gharagh Chenar, and in

Dehbid region of Abadeh, Shoorab & Mahkooyeh region of Firoozabad, and the old road of Meimand to Firoozabad.

### **Conclusion**

Since achieving sustainable development requires analyzing different structural, economic and natural aspects, one of the important pivots and fundamental components in sustainable development, with the environmental preservation and economic view, is the use of potentials and capabilities to attract tourists in development of the regions. Fars province is considered as one of the most important tourist attractions in Iran due to different natural, human, and historical attractions. In this regard, what is significant and the main objective of this research is attention to capacities and delicacies of various attractions, especially attraction of plants (medicinal and ornamental), and considering the function of these plants in maintaining physical and mental health of the community who attracts tourists. The study of Fars province shows that there is diversity and abundance of plant attractions. The presence of various medicinal and ornamental flowers with several medical properties in different areas for maintaining physical and mental health of the community of the region indicates that this province has many capabilities in attracting tourism by emphasizing the presence and introducing plants.

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