Ethnobotanical survey can provide insights on how people exploit their local resources and feed back into interpretation of archaeological evidence. A common predicament in archaeobotany is the relatively low proportion of the plant material exploited by humans that survives into the archaeobotanical record. This poster discusses contrasting non-staple crop or secondary resource plant use in 4 traditional villages in Thailand. One Karen village, one Thai village both in the northern uplands, one coastal village in the Andaman islands and an inland village in Ranong province populated by people who have settled there after migrating from north east Thailand.

Building modern analogues of past cultural and economic practice are essential for the construction of archaeological models. Here I employ ethnobotanical data from contrasting regions of Thailand to better understand the exploitation of economic plants in the context of traditional village systems.

The methodology is to first interview the local people, identify what is being grown in the village gardens and collected from in and around the village, how it got there and how it is used. Many plants in the surveyed gardens have been gathered from the forest and replanted. Some were gifts from friends and others brought from another region. Some plants are not cultivated but are gathered from the wild or from community forests when needed, others are collected from pathways and ditches. The next task was to identify the various economic uses of the plants: food, fibre, ceremony, construction, colouring, pleasure, fire, decoration, medicine or cash and then distinguish small-scale vegetation from wild plants. What happens to any waste material and how this is disposed of is key to what might survive into the archaeobotanical record. Many plants that are used every day will be invisible archaeobotanically.

The Tung Dap plant family frequency chart shows the distribution of plant families in the Tung Dap village. The chart indicates the frequency of plant families used in the various economic activities in the village. The chart is divided into categories such as food, fibre, construction, colouring, and pleasure/masticatory. The frequency is represented by the height of the bars, with taller bars indicating a higher frequency.

The Tung Dap village uses a variety of plant families for different purposes. For example, the family Amaryllidaceae is used for food, while the family Anacardiaceae is used for construction. The chart also shows the frequency of plant families in other villages, such as Ban Huai Hee and Ban Hua Tong, which can be compared to Tung Dap to understand the similarities and differences in plant use across the villages.

The Tung Dap optical evaporation meal chart shows the meal composition in the Tung Dap village. The chart indicates the proportion of different ingredients in the meal. The meal is composed of a mixture of foods such as fish, squid, swallows, sandworms, chicken, and a mixture of gathered leaves, vegetables, fruits from the garden and some brought from the mainland.

The Tung Dap plant use chart shows the use of plants in the Tung Dap village. The chart indicates the frequency of plant use in different economic activities such as construction, colouring, and pleasure/masticatory. The chart also shows the frequency of plant use in other villages, such as Ban Huai Hee and Ban Hua Tong, which can be compared to Tung Dap to understand the similarities and differences in plant use across the villages.

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