

### Abstract

This study aimed to search a possible avenue for prolonging shelf life of selected medicinal herbs to maintain keeping quality during the storage. It helps to preserve seasonal surplus, to prevent seasonal shortages and to introduce ready-to-use healthy drinks to the society. At present, use of healthy foods and drinks has gained popularity among people in Sri Lanka. A series of laboratory experiments were conducted at the Department of Crop Science and Agricultural Chemistry, University of Ruhuna, in 2004, to study the effects of drying temperatures and packing materials on keeping quality of medicinal herbs, namely, *Centella asiatica* (Gotukola), *Alternanthera sessilis* (Mukunuwenna) and *Cardiospermum halicabum* (Welpenela). Three drying temperatures (70°C, 80°C and 90°C) and three packing materials (Polyethylene gauge 150, 300 and Cellophane gauge 150) were tested in RCBD with 3 replicates. Colour, moisture content and nutrient composition were taken as measurements to determine the treatment effects. Drying temperature did not affect on colour, moisture content, mineral content and protein content. However, 70°C showed the highest vitamin C content. Packaging material was not affected on colour changes for 2 months period. Results suggested storing of dried herbs in dark colour packing material to preserve colour.