



## Herbal Garden (Muligai Vanam)

### Adhatoda



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<b>Botanical Name</b>	:	<i>Justicia adhatoda</i> L.
<b>Tamil Name</b>	:	Adhatoda, Aadu theendaa paalai
<b>Sanskrit Name</b>	:	Vasaka
<b>English Name</b>	:	Malabar Nut

### Distribution and Habitat

Adhatoda (*Justicia adhatoda* L.) is a small, shrub, evergreen plant that belongs to the *Acanthaceae* family. It is widely distributed throughout the tropical regions of South East Asia, India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Burma. It is found upto 1300m above sea level in lower Himalayas. It usually grows well along road side, dry and waste places and stony soil. Normally, the plant ranges from 50cm to 90cm in height. Leaves are minute hairy, lanceolate and broad. Flowers are white with pink, red or white spots or streaks; calyx is hairy and deeply divided into 5 lobes. Fruits are young having club-shaped capsules.



### Parts used

Leaves, roots, stem bark and flower.

### Phyto-chemical constituents

Alkaloids, flavonoids, phenols, saponnins, tannins, anthraquinones and amino acids.

### Uses

The leaves can be applied as green manure due to the presence of potassium nitrate. The leaves are used in packing and storing fruit as it helps in ripening. It also inhibits fungi and repels insects from stored fruits. It has soft stem that makes a good charcoal. The leaves and flowers of the plant are cooked as vegetable in India and Nepal by the Khasi tribe.



## Medicinal uses

The leaves, roots and flowers of *Adhatoda* are being used extensively in traditional Indian medicine for thousands of years to treat respiratory disorders such as asthma. The plant is considered useful in treating bronchitis, tuberculosis, whooping cough, sore throat and other lung and bronchiole disorders. A decoction of the leaves may be used as an herbal treatment for cough and other symptoms of cold. A poultice of the leaves may be applied to wounds for their anti-bacterial and anti-inflammatory properties. *Adathoda* is a good source of nectar. Honey produced from this plant has been reported to be powerful antispasmodic, expectorant and blood-purifying qualities (Khan, 2014). A juice made from the leaves is used as a treatment for diarrhoea, dysentery and to control both internal and external bleeding such as bleeding gums, peptic ulcers and haemorrhoids. In India and Sri Lanka, the fresh bruised leaves are used for the treatment of snake-bites (Nandre *et al.* 2012). In Nepal, leaf juice is recommended for malarial fever. In Bangladesh, the juice from leaves and bark are used for nausea and as an anthelmintic and additionally, it is used as a folk medicine to speed delivery uring childbirth.



## Conclusion

*Justicia adhatoda* L. is a medicinal plant found along roadside, wastelands and other degraded areas in various warmer parts of the world. The whole plant is being used in India in the indigenous medicine system for over several years. It is also used in Unani medicine for the treatment of various respiratory diseases.

