**Herbal Garden (Muligai Vanam)**

**Ivy Gourd**

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Botanical Name</th>
<th>Coccinia grandis (L.) Voigt</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tamil Name</td>
<td>Kovaikkai</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sanskrit Name</td>
<td>Bimbiks</td>
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<td>English Name</td>
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**Distribution and Habitat**

*Coccinia grandis* (L.) Voigt is a tropical plant in the Cucurbitaceae family. The plant is distributed in tropical Asia, Africa and is commonly found in Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka. It is a fast-growing perennial vine that grows several meters long. It can form dense mats on lands that readily cover shrubs and small trees. It is an outdoor plant but prefers a sunny sheltered position and a sandy soil. The roots and stems are succulent, tuberous and most likely facilitate the plant to survive prolonged drought. The tendrils are long, elastic with coil-like springy character that can wrap around the host to the entire length. Its leaves are arranged alternately along the stems; the shape of the leaves varies from heart to pentagon and size of the leaves is approximately 5 –10 cm. Flowers are large, white and star-shaped. The fruit is red, ovoid to elliptical, 25 – 60 mm long, 15 – 35 mm in diameter and contains several pale, flattened seeds.

**Parts used**
Leaves, root, and fruit.

**Chemical constituents**
Resin, alkaloids, starch, fatty acids, carbonic acid, triterpenoids, saponin, coccinoside, flavonoid glucoside, β-amyrin, β-sitosterol, and taraxerol.

**Uses**
Fruits and leaves are edible either fresh or cooked. It is also used as a household grandmas’ remedy for many minor illnesses.

**Medicinal uses**
This plant has been used in traditional medicine as household remedy for various diseases. The plant parts of *C. grandis* such as roots, leaves and fruits are used for numerous medicinal properties like wound healing, ulcers, jaundice, diabetes and antipyretic, analgesic, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, anticancer, and antimicrobial. Decoction of leaves is used as antispasmodic, expectorant and in cases of chronic bronchitis. The paste of leaves is applied externally in ringworm, psoriasis and itching. Juice of leaves is also useful in treatment of diabetes and malarial infection (Gill et al. 2014). Green fruit cures sores on tongue and dried fruit removes eczema. Fruit juice is useful in treatment of fever, leprosy and jaundice. Dried powdered root bark is used as cathartic and also to remove pain in joints and the treatment of diabetes (Mishra et al. 2012).

**Conclusion**
*Coccinia grandis* is one of the popular and important medicinal plants of tropical and moderate areas of the world. The whole plant of *C. grandis* has been reported for its biochemical and pharmacological activities such as diuretic, anti-hypertensive, anti-hyperlipidemic, cardio-protective, anti-diabetic, anti-cancer, hepato-protective, anthelmintic, anti-bacterial, analgesic, anti-inflammatory, and antioxidant activity.