



## Herbal Garden (Muligai Vanam)

### Multi Vitamin Plant



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<b>Botanical Name</b>	:	<i>Sauropus androgynus (L.) Merr.</i>
<b>Tamil Name</b>	:	Thavasi keerai
<b>Sanskrit Name</b>	:	Not available
<b>English Name</b>	:	Multi vitamin plant

#### Distribution and Habitat

*Sauropus androgynus* (L.) Merr belongs to the family Phyllanthaceae. It is a shrub that grows in high temperature and humid conditions. The plant is distributed in the Himalayas, from Nepal to Sikkim, also in Western Ghats, Ceylon, Indo-China, South China and Western Malaysia, at altitudes of 500-900 m. Its branches are either cylindrical or angled. The leaves are pinnately compound; ovate or lanceolate. Stems are vertical and woody. The flowers are dark red in colour, fruits globose; light yellow; seeds black. The plant has separate male and female flowers.



#### Parts used

Leaf, stem, flower, fruit and root.

#### Phyto-chemical constituents

Sterols, resins, tannins, saponins, alkaloids, flavonoids, terpenoids, glycosides, phenols, catechol, cardiac glycosides, acidic compounds, carotenoids, vitamins and minerals. The leaves also contain amino acids, lysine, methionine, tryptophan, phenylalanine, threonine, valine, leucine and isoleucine.

#### Uses

*S.androgynus* has been known as “multi green” due to its high vitamin and nutrient content and is usually consumed raw in salad, stir-fried, used in curry, or cooked in soups in most countries in Southeast Asia.

## Medicinal uses



*S. androgynus* plays a major role in traditional medicinal systems for curing some ailments as it is a good source of fatty acids, polyphenols, and flavonoids. The leaves are used to relieve cough and to soothe the lungs, as a tonic and as a febrifuge to relieve internal fever. The leaves are also used to treat erythema, measles and dysuria. The leaves are given to women after delivery to allow post-partum recovery and to enhance lactation in feeding mothers. A decoction of the root is claimed as a remedy for fever and for urinary bladder complaints. The roots are used in the treatment of cardiovascular disease or symptoms of this group of diseases including vertigo, dizziness, fainting spells. It is also being recommended to those with hypertension (Hermana, 2013). A mouth wash is said to be prepared from the juice of the fresh leaves and honey or made in the form of a paste and applied to the tongue and gums to cure thrush of the tongue in infants. The Irula, Mudugu and Kurumba tribes, inhabiting the Attapadi hills of the Western Ghats of India consume the cooked leaves for the improvement of general health. In certain other parts of Tamil Nadu and Kerala, the leafy-vegetable is frequently referred to as 'diabetic greens' as there is a general belief that it is useful for diabetic cure. The consumption of fresh juice has been widely advertised as a 'natural diet vegetable' possessing large amounts of nutrients and is capable of rapidly reducing weight, effective in controlling hypertension, gynecologic problems, hyperlipidemia, hyperuricemia, urolithiasis, gall stones and constipation (Nadanakunjitham, 2000 and Jothi et al. 2008).

## Conclusion

*S. androgynus* (L.) Merr. is an underexploited perennial shrub traditionally used as a medicinal plant in South Asia and Southeast Asia. The plant is regarded as not just a green vegetable for diet, but as a traditional herb for several ailments. It has traditionally been used to relieve fever, to treat ulcers and diabetes, to promote lactation and eyesight, and to reduce obesity. Awareness on the traditional utilisation of this shrub should be widely propagated.

