



Herbal Garden (Muligai Vanam)



Red Pea Egg plant

Dr. A. Abirami

Programme Officer

C.P.R. Environmental Education Centre
Chennai

Botanical Name	:	<i>Solanum trilobatum</i> (L.)
Tamil Name	:	Thudhuvalai
Sanskrit Name	:	Alarka
English Name	:	Red Pea Egg plant

Distribution and Habitat

Solanum trilobatum (L.) belongs to the family Solanaceae, native to India, Laos, Malaya, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam. This shrub is found mostly in dry places as a weed along roadsides and waste lands. It is a prickly diffuse, bright green scrambling shrub, woody at the base, 2–3 m height. Leaves are deltoid or triangular, irregularly lobed. The entire stem and leaves contain thorns all over the plant. Flowers are star shaped purplish-blue, in cymes. Fruits are small, globose and contain numerous tiny seeds. They come in light green colour and turn red when ripe.



Parts used

Leaf, flower, fruit and root

Phyto chemical constituents

Steroids, triterpenoids, alkaloids, phenolic acids, flavonoids, saponins, amino acids and carbohydrate

Uses

This plant is used as a leafy vegetable for the preparation of various dishes. The alkaloid compound Solasodine is present in the leaves, fruits; seeds and stem are widely used for

steroid drug production. Leaf extracts of this plant can be an ideal eco-friendly approach for controlling mosquitoes.

Medicinal uses

S. trilobatum is used as a rejuvenator and consumed as greens which are capable of alleviating phlegmatic diseases. The leaves are used to treat hypogeusia, flower is an aphrodisiac, and fruit pacifies *Aiyam* (Phlegm), *Vali* (Air) and *Azhal* (Heat). Root and stem relieves cough, wheezing and phlegmatic afflictions (Mudaliar, 2006). The leaves alleviate dullness of the ear and its related disorders especially due to phlegm and cough. In the Ayurveda and Siddha system of medicine, their roots, fruits, and leaves are prescribed to heal various respiratory tract problems, including tuberculosis, asthma, sinusitis, tonsillitis, common cold, cough, pulmonary infections, etc. The leaf extract appears to increase male fertility and counteracts snake poison and cures lung sicknesses (Immanuel et al. 2006). Tender leaves of this plant are considered as a remedy for intestinal worms and to improve memory. The plant was served as soup to COVID-19 patients at Siddha COVID Care Centres (SCCC) and is part of the diet chart issued by the Ministry of AYUSH and Directorate of Indian Medicine and Homoeopathy, Government of Tamil Nadu (Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India, 2020).



Conclusion

S. trilobatum (L). is considered as a versatile medicinal plant in both Ayurveda and modern drug development areas for its valuable pharmaceutical uses. Based on various research reports, the plant or its individual parts can be used as hepato-protective, antimicrobial, antioxidant, cytotoxic, haemolytic, anti-inflammatory, anti-diabetic, antipyretic, and immunomodulatory activity. Cultivation of *S. trilobatum* is now being taken up on a large scale to meet the demand for its medicinal properties.

