



Herbal Garden (Muligai Vanam)



Mudakkathan

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Botanical Name	:	<i>Cardiospermum halicacabum</i> L.
Tamil Name	:	Mudakkathan
Sanskrit Name	:	Karnasphota
English Name	:	Balloon Vine

Distribution and Habitat

Cardiospermum halicacabum L. is a creeper which belongs to family Sapindaceae. This plant is extensively dispersed in tropical and sub-tropical areas. It is spread in the plains of Africa, America, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. It is often consumed as greens in India.



C. halicacabum is a slender, sparsely hairy plant that climbs on other plants, and attains 1–3 m in length. The leaves are trifoliate; 5–9 cm long with small stipules at the base. The stems are 3 mm in thickness that can reach to a height of 2 m. Flowers zygomorphic; white, 3-4 mm long. Seeds globose; 4-6 mm diameter, smooth, black, with a small white heart-shaped aril.

Parts used

Leaf, stem, root and seed.

Phytochemical constituents

Flavones, aglycones, triterpenoids, alkaloids, carbohydrates, proteins, saponins, lignin, stigmasterol, apigenin, proanthocyanidin, steroids, cardiac glycosides, variety of fatty acids and volatile esters.

Uses

Young leaves can be used to prepare soup, dosai, chutney and rice mix. The oil from the whole plant is used to arrest hair fall, and it promotes hair growth.

Medicinal uses

C. halicacabum is one of the widely consumed greens. In the Indian traditional system of medicines, this plant is mainly used to treat arthritis. The roots are diuretic, diaphoretic, emetic, mucilaginous, and laxative and useful to treat earache, headache, fever, arthritis, amenorrhea, lumbago and neuropathy. The plant has sedative action on the central



nervous system (Mahmood et al., 2016). Dried aerial parts are used in chronic bronchitis, rheumatism, nervous diseases, piles, amenorrhea, skin inflammation, arthritis, itching and psoriasis. The herb is used in hair oils for treating dandruff, and for darkening hair. The whole plant possesses activities like antimicrobial, antifungal, anti-parasitic, anti-diarrheal, antipyretic and management of painful, arthritic inflammatory conditions (Sagadevan et al., 2014).

Conclusion

C. halicacabum is a climbing plant often found as a weed along road and riverside. This herb has enormous medicinal value, and is used to treat simple ailments to chronic diseases. It possesses significant properties that support its role in medicinal field.

Photo: Ms.Princy S, Intern, CPREEC, Chennai

