



Herbal Garden (Muligai Vanam)



Stone Breaker

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| Botanical Name | : | <i>Phyllanthus amarus</i> Schum. & Thonn. |
| Tamil Name | : | Keezhanelli, Keezhkainelli |
| Sanskrit Name | : | Bhumyamalaki |
| English Name | : | Stone breaker |

Distribution and Habitat

Phyllanthus amarus is a glabrous herb of the family Phyllanthaceae. It is a common weed that grows well in moist, shady and sunny places throughout tropics and subtropics. In India it is widely distributed as a weed in cultivated and waste lands.



The herb is 30 -60 cm high, leaves 6-8 x 3-4 mm, oblong, base unequal, apex obtuse to acute, lower surface glaucous; stipules lanceolate, scarious. Flowers are axillary and yellowish, whitish or greenish. Male flowers are in groups of 1-3 whereas females are solitary. Fruits are depressed globose like smooth capsules present underneath the branches and seeds, pale brown with longitudinal parallel ribs on the back. Capsules on stalks are 1-2 mm long, round, smooth, 2 mm wide, six seeds. The plant has explosive seed capsules that propel the seeds some distance from the plant.

Parts used

Whole plant

Phytochemical constituents

Alkaloids – securinine, epibubbialine; Flavonoids – quercetin, kaempferol, astragalin; Tannins – amarulone, geraniin, amariin, furososin, melatonin; Lignans – phyllanthin, nirtetralin, phyltetralin; Sterols - amarosteol A and B; Triterpenes – phenazine and phenazine derivatives; Volatile oils – linalool and phytol.

Medicinal uses

Phyllanthus amarus is popular in indigenous system of medicine like ayurveda, siddha, unani and homeopathy. The plant is bitter, astringent, cooling, diuretic, stomachic, febrifuge and antiseptic. It is generally employed to reduce pain, expel intestinal gas, promote digestion, to expel intestinal worms and act as a mild laxative. This



herb is traditionally used several health problems such as diarrhoea, dysentery, jaundice, intermittent fevers, urino-genital disorders, scabies and wounds. The plants are used in the treatment of kidney problems, urinary bladder disturbances, pain, gonorrhoea, diabetes and chronic dysentery. Topically, it is used for several skin problems ranging from skin ulcers, sores, swelling, itchiness, wounds, and scabies. The young shoots are administered in the form of an infusion for the treatment of chronic dysentery. Fresh leaf paste and stem juice has wound healing capacity and used to cure white spots on skin. The whole plant extract is used in urinary problems and swelling of liver (Jyoti et al. 2018). The root extract is used to cure stomach pain. The flower paste of plant is applied externally as antidote against snake bite. The root is ground into a paste, mixed with milk and consumed to cure jaundice, constipation, genito-urinary disorders. The leaves are chewed to check hiccups. A poultice of leaves mixed with salt is used in the treatment of itch and skin diseases like psoriasis (Sudhakar, 2007). The extracts and compounds isolated from the plant have been shown to possess anti-viral, anti-diabetic, anti-hepa-toxic, anti-bacterial, anti-inflammatory, anti-plasmodial, anti-malarial, hypo-lipidemic, anti-oxidant, anti-ulcer, analgeic and anti-cancer activities (Patel et al. 2011).

Conclusion

P. amarus are widely distributed in most tropical and subtropical countries and have long been used in traditional medicine to treat chronic liver diseases. It plays important role in the development of green medicines which are safer to use and more dependable than costly synthetic drugs with no adverse effects. The whole plant uses are gaining momentum because of their novel antiviral activity against hepatitis B virus and gallbladder stones, for cold, flu, tuberculosis, and liver diseases.

Photo link: <http://pharmaveda.com/kb/Bhuiawala.html>;

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phyllanthus_amarus

