



## Herbal Garden (Muligai Vanam)

### Vellerukku



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|                       |   |                                               |
|-----------------------|---|-----------------------------------------------|
| <b>Botanical Name</b> | : | <i>Calotropis procera</i> (Aiton). W.T. Aiton |
| <b>Tamil Name</b>     | : | Vellerukku                                    |
| <b>Sanskrit Name</b>  | : | Alarka                                        |
| <b>English Name</b>   | : | Rubber Bush, Sodom apple                      |

#### Distribution and Habitat

*Calotropis procera* (Aiton). W. T. Aiton belongs to the family Apocynaceae and is a soft wooded, evergreen perennial shrub or small tree that grows to a height of 2.5 - 6 m, with milky latex throughout. It is an erect shrub, native to India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Sri Lanka and China. The leaves are large, broad, pale green, succulent, opposite, and covered with cuticular wax. The flowers are small, cream or greenish-white at base and purple violet at the extremity



of the lobes. Each flower consists of five pointed petals and a small, elegant "crown" rising from the centre, which holds the stamens. Fruit is grey-green, inflated, 8-12 cm long, containing numerous seeds.

#### Parts used

Leaves, flower, bark and roots.

#### Phyto-chemical constituents

Phenols, flavonoids, terpenoids, sugars, alkaloids, tannins, cardenolides, glycoside, saponins, steroids and volatile organic compounds.

## Uses

The fibre of the plant is useful to make baskets, ropes, sacks and nets. The wood is used as timber, fuel and fodder. The latex of the plant is an important source for the preparation of folk medicine (Orwe et al., 2009).

## Medicinal uses

*Calotropis procera* is one of the important traditional herbal medicine in every home of India. The flower is used as an appetizer, stomach ache, piles and asthma. Root bark is useful for treating chronic cases of dyspepsia, flatulence, constipation, loss of appetite, indigestion and mucus in stools. Leaves are used against guinea worms. The tender



leaves of the plant are also used to treat migraine. The fresh leaves and latex is applied to painful joints and swelling. The milky juice is used as a purgative, while flowers are considered as digestive, stomachic, tonic and useful in cough, asthma and loss of appetite. Leaf latex if applied on fresh cut to stop bleeding. The dried latex and dried root are used as an antidote for snake poisoning. The root bark is useful in treating skin disease and intestinal worms. Traditionally the leaves are warmed and tied around the body to relieve the pain. It is practically useful in backache and joint pains. Warm leaves also relieve stomach ache if tied around. Inhalation of burnt leaf cures headache (Parihar and Balekar, 2016; Verma et al. 2010).

## Conclusion

*C. procera* is a plant which is widely used in the Indian traditional medicinal system as well as in Arabic, Unani, and Sudanese systems. The plant is also used by various tribes of the world as a curative agent for ailments such as fever, rheumatism, indigestion, cough, cold, eczema, asthma, elephantiasis, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea. The whole plant has been reported for its biochemical and pharmacological activities such as diuretic, antihypertensive, antihyperlipidemic, cardioprotective, antidiabetic, anticancer, hepatoprotective, anthelmintic, antibacterial, analgesic, anti-inflammatory, and antioxidant activity. A comprehensive database of this plants used for various purposes could be saved for the forthcoming generations. Apart from the above, this plant is considered sacred and sthala vriksham in several temples. The flowers are offered to Lord Ganesha and Shiva.

Photo link: [https://www.inaturalist.org/taxa/67577-Calotropis/browse\\_photos](https://www.inaturalist.org/taxa/67577-Calotropis/browse_photos); <https://greentropicals.wordpress.com/2012/09/08/crown-flower-calotropis-gigantea/>

