



Herbal Garden (Muligai Vanam)

Clearing Nut



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| Botanical Name | : | <i>Strychnos potatorum</i> L. |
| Tamil Name | : | Thetran kottai |
| Sanskrit Name | : | Kataka |
| English Name | : | Clearing nut |

Distribution and Habitat

Strychnos potatorum is a medium sized; glabrous tree belongs to the family Loganiaceae. It can be found in Bengal, Central, and Southern India's deciduous forests up to 1200 metres. Stem- fluted and covered with black, thick, square to rectangular scales. Bark thick, black or brownish-black, with deep and narrow vertical, thin ridges.



Branches have enlarged nodes. Leaves long, sessile, ovate or elliptic, acute, glabrous, glossy, Petioles 2.5mm long, base rounded. Flowers nearly glabrous, sessile axillary cymes; 0.5mm long peduncles; Calyx 2mm long, five-lobed, oblong, sharp lobes that each has a tuft of hair inside near the base. Ovary oval, smooth, tapering into a long glabrous style. Stigma two lobed. Fruit berry, globose, , pale, shiny, and covered silky yellow hairs when mature.

Parts used: Leaf, root, fruits and seeds

Phytochemical constituents

Phenols, flavonoids, alkaloids, glycosides, tannins, lignins, steroids, saponins, terpenoids, amide derivatives, amino acids, and proteins.

Uses

Water is purified by rubbing cut seeds on the inside of a rough earthenware vessel and then letting it sit, allowing impurities to sink to the bottom. The seeds contain polyelectrolytes which can be used as coagulants to clarify turbid waters.



Medicinal uses

Clearing nut serves as a good appetizer, removes phlegm and cures stomach ailments. Dried and powdered seeds, mixed with cow's milk, are consumed twice a day to cure urinary infection and diabetes (Sudhakar, 2007). The leaves are used to treat watering and aching eyes. The roots are aphrodisiac. The vapour of a root decoction is inhaled to treat cold and venereal diseases. The paste of the roots of this herb is used to treat eczema. The decoction of the root and leaves is taken to treat cough. The seeds are used for the treatment of a range of complaints including those affecting the liver, kidneys and stomach; gonorrhoea, bronchitis, chronic diarrhoea, kidney and bladder stones. The seeds have a wide spectrum of established pharmacological activity that includes anti-inflammatory anti-hyper-cholesterolemic, diuretic, anti-diarrhoeal, hepato-protective, anti-nociceptive, antipyretic and antiulcer activities (Biswas et al. 2012). The seeds are rubbed up with honey and camphor and the mixture applied to the eyes as a remedy for excessive shedding of tears. The powder of seeds used with honey will help in controlling the liver functions and works upon jaundice, and anaemia. The fruit pulp, or the powdered, mature fruit is considered to be an effective emetic.

Photo link: <https://indiabiodiversity.org/species/show/31804>

