

SPIRITUAL MEDICINAL PLANTS

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Article Received on
21 October 2022,

Revised on 11 Nov. 2022,
Accepted on 01 Dec. 2022

DOI: 10.20959/wjpr202216-26435

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ABSTRACT

Spiritual Medicinal plants includes various types of plants used in herbalism. Spiritual plant has played significant historical as well as current medicinal roles in human life over many centuries. Medicinal application of spiritual plants carries healthier and harmless alternate to synthetic system of drugs. Present review focus on summarizing and discussing essential details, spiritual value and potential of spiritual plants for medicinal application towards economic development.

KEYWORDS: Spiritual healing, Immunomodulation, Astringent, Cardiotonic, Itching.

INTRODUCTION

Spiritual belief is a pervasive aspect of Indian Culture, although belief systems vary widely between Tribes/ Nations and geographic areas. Most Indian traditions teach that the interconnectedness of all things leads to a relationship between man, creator/ god, fellowman and nature. In many Indian traditions, healing, spiritual belief or power and community were not separated, and often the entire community was involved in a healing ceremony and in a maintaining the power of Indian medicines (the term “ medicine” is often used to denote the actions, traditions, ceremony, remedies or other forms of prayer or honoring scared. The concept of healing power that is maintained by the collective consciousness and belief of people of an Indian community is referred to here).

In some tribes and nations, cause of illness were considered to be an imbalance between the spiritual, mental, physical and social interaction of the individual and his family. Since from ancient hindu families, there is lot of importance for spiritual plant drugs. Old aged

considered that some plant have preferential value in our day to day life. The old peoples also have a faith that such plants can resolve and kept away us from lot of difficulties. Therefore theses peoples worship those plants by offering fruits, leaves, flowers or roots of plants to the god almighty.

For example: Bael leaf and fruit to Lord Shiva, Rui flower and leaf to Lord Shri Hanuman, Durva leaf to Lord Ganesha etc.

It has been proved that these plants can also remove effects of all types of negative energy / aura and black magic from our minds. Hence they are also used in homes. Some of the spiritual plants gives blessings as like Tulsi.

Nature plays a vital role in healing, providing life, and forming a spiritual connection with all living beings. Plants are the essence of Mother Nature and carry the natural energy of Gaia within them. Humans have been using this energy since ancient times and the Chinese practice of feng shui includes strategically placing plants in certain spaces to reduce psychological stress. The living energy of plants naturally attracts positivity and offers a completely new sense of being. Inviting positive energy into your home improves your health, longevity, and happiness in life. Here are the top 10 spiritual plants that you can bring home to spread positivity and happiness, blessings as like Tulsi.

1. Kateri Shami (Banni tree, Prosopis cineraria)

Shami Tree, also called Banni Mara, Khejri tree is immensely known for its spiritual uses. In Dussehra the 10 day long Hindu festival , on the 10th day, the leaves of this are distributed among one another to share mutual love and respect and to forget past bitterness. No wonder the tree has been given synonyms such as Lakshmi, Shiva, Seeta etc. suggesting to its auspiciousness.



Figure 1: Prosopis spicigera.

Synonyms:- Banni Tree, khejri tree

Biological source:- It consist of dried bark and fruit of *Prosopis spicigera* / *Prosopis cineraria* Linn

Family:- Mimosaceae

Useful parts- Bark, fruit

Geographical source:- it is mainly found in India regions of Rajasthan, Delhi, Gujarat, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan.

Chemical constituents

Flowers – Patulitrin, Patuletin, Prosogerins A, B. Paluritin a flavones glycoside Patulitrin Prosogerins A, B and C Glucoside patulitrin.

Seeds – Specigerin, fixed oil(4.5%), prosogerine, Flavone prosogerin C.

The tree contain – 5-hydroxytryptamine, apigenin, isorhamnetin-3- diglucoside, tannin and tryptamine.

Wood ash – 31% of soluble potassium salts, used as a source of potash.

Stem – Ursolic acid, glycosides of campestral, stigmasterol, B-sitosterol.

Spiritual significance

Use in auspicious rituals

The Khejri leaves are soaked in water and take bath on Diwali festival day. This is considered as auspicious and sin-cleansing. The tree is prayed with the following verse-

Shami Shamayate papam shami lokhitkantaka

Dharinyarjunbananam Ramasya priyavadini

Karishmanyatraya yathakal such mya

Tatra nirvighanktri twam bhav sree Rampuite

Meaning – The shami tree cleanses sins, helps to defeat enemies. It is Lord Ramas favourite tree and in such a tree Pandavas hid their arms. O Shami , Lord Rama has worshipped you. Now embark upon my journey to victory. May you make it pleasant and free from obstacles.

Uses

1. It is considered as a symbol of courage, peace and prosperity.
2. It is the tree where the pandavas hide their weapons during war.
3. It is also called as Kalpavriksha of desert or the king of dessert.
4. It is used in facial black head removal.
5. It is used in diarrhea.
6. It is used in bleeding disorders.
7. It is used in itching skin diseases.
8. It is believed that if someone meditates a mantra for an hour or even half an hour under Shami vruksha / tree, long timed diseases will be cured.
9. Its leaves and flowers are used for worshipping Lord Shiva.
10. It is believed that planting Shami plant in the house brings blessings and there is never any shortage of money in the house.
11. Planting Shami plant in the house removes all sorrows and brings happiness and prosperity.
12. It is also said that by planting Shami plant in the house, Vastu defects are also removed and all the obstacles in the house are erased.
13. According to Hindu beliefs, planting Shami plant also removes obstacles in marriage.
14. If any member of the house is suffering from Sade Sati, then planting a Shami plant in the house reduces the effect of Sade Sati.

Dose - Fruit powder - 3-6 gm, decoction - 40-80 ml

2. Durva (Dhoob grass)

The word Durva is derived from the words duhu and avam. Durva brings the distant pure spiritual particles (pavitraks) of God closer to the devotee. The durva grass consists of three blades which represent the three principles of the primal Shiva, the primal Shakti and the primal Ganesha.



Figure 2 : *Cynodon dactylon* (Linn.).

Synonyms:- Shataparva, Shatavalli, Harita, Jaya, Bhutahantri

Biological source:- Durva consists of dried whole plant of *Cynodon dactylon* (Linn.)

Family:- Poaceae

Parts used - Leaves & whole plant

Geographical source:- It is widely distributed throughout India ascending to 1500 meters in the lower Himalayas, throughout the year. Durva is native to North and East Africa, Asia, Australia, and Southern Europe.

The plant *C. dactylon* prefers light sandy, medium loam and heavy clay soils. It can even grow in very acidic, alkaline and saline soils. However, it cannot grow in shady places. It needs moisture in soil. It has been introduced throughout warm-temperate and the sub-tropical world primarily for use as a lawn grass or as a forage grass, especially in saline habitats as reported by various workers.

Chemical constituents:- Terpenoides, triterpenoids steroids, saponins, tannins, resins, phytosterols, reducing sugars, carbohydrates, proteins, volatile oils and fixed oils, alkaloids 0.1%, resins 1.0%, free reducing sugar 10% and total reducing sugar 12%.

Uses

1. It helps to treat acidity.
2. It also helps to boost immunity.
3. Helps to maintain the sugar level in the body.
4. It has to cure Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome and solve menstrual problems.
5. Treats obesity.
6. Cure the bleeding of gums.

7. Cures eye infections.
8. It is the most sacred plant of India next to tulsi.
9. Hindus worship the God Ganesha with the leaves durva religiously.

Marketed formulation

Durva Ras.

Ingredients:- Durva Nagar Motha

Direction:- it is recommended to take 15 to 30ml twice a daily before each meal. Dilute with half cup of water or as directed by the physician.

Net weight:- 450 ml

Dosage forms

Paste- It is used in application on any inflammation, wounds, skin ailments and pain. It is very effective in skin disorders, wounds and scar.

Powder- It is very helpful in nausea, diarrhoea, and piles.

Juice- It is useful in urine related disorders and urinary tract infections. It is also useful in stopping haemorrhages occurring in body.

Dose - Juice: 10-20 ml

3. Bael

The Bael's trifoliate leaf arrangement is of great significance in Hinduism. On one level the 3 leaflets signify *the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara*. On another level, the trifoliate leaflets also signify *the 3 eyes of Shiva* and point to an *unusually awakened and spiritually charged plant*.

The Skanda Purana says that the Bael tree grew from the sweat of Goddess Parvati, so she is set to reside in her different avatars in various parts of the tree – for example, the branches of Bael are said to be Dakshayani, the Bael / Vilwa fruit is Goddess Katyayani and Goddess Gauri, its flowers.

Apart from literally embodying the Shaktis, the Bael tree is also considered extremely auspicious and connected with Goddess Lakshmi. So culturally, it is considered good form to do a circumambulation of a Bael tree for good luck before starting any new venture – especially if the Bael tree is the Sthala Vriksha of a temple.



Figure 3: Aegle marmelos corr.

Synonyms:- Bengal quince, Golden apple, Japanese bitter orange, Stone apple, Belan or wood apple.

Biological sources:- Bael consists of the unripe or half-ripe fruits or their slices or irregular pieces of *Aegle marmelos Corr.*

Family:- Rutaceae

Geographical source:- The Bael tree has its origin from Eastern Ghats and Central India. It is indigenous to Indian subcontinent and mainly found in tropical and subtropical regions. The tree is also found as a wild tree, in lower ranges of Himalayas up to an elevation of 500 meters.

Chemical constituents:- The chief constituent of the drug is marmelosin A, B and C (0.5%), which is a furocoumarin. Other coumarins are marmesin, psoralin and umbelliferone. The drug also contains carbohydrates (11–17%), protein, volatile oil and tannins. The pulp also contains good amount of vitamins C and A. Two alkaloids O-methylhalfordinol and isopentylhalfordinol have been isolated from fruits. Other alkaloids reported in the drug are angelenine, marmeline and dictamine.

Uses

1. Management of bacteria induced diarrhoea and cholera.
2. Good for digestion.
3. Act as blood purifier.
4. May reduce cancer risk.
5. Protects from skin infections.
6. The root extract and the unripe fruit pulp of Bael might help with diarrhoea.
7. Bael is used for constipation, diarrhea, diabetes, and other conditions

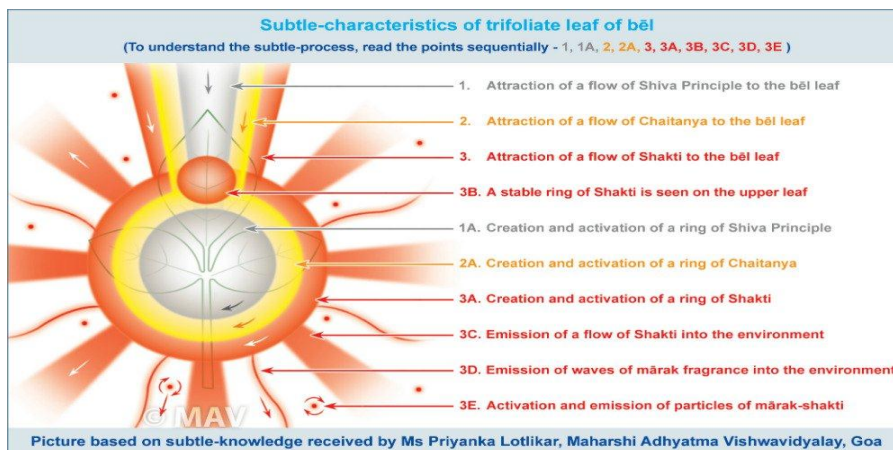


Figure 4: Subtle – characteristics of trifoliate leaf of bel.

Marketed formulation

Bael Powder.

Ingredients:- Bilva Powder 3gram per serving.

Dosage:- 1 tablespoon twice daily with warm water or as directed by the physician.

Storage:- Store in cool and dry place.

Keep out from children's reach.

4. Ficus religiosa

Peepal or Ficus Religiosa is considered holy in some religions like Hinduism, Jainism & Buddhism. It is worshipped by many peoples in these religions.

It is believed that Gautam Buddha was enlightened under a Peepal Tree. Hence many people follow the same practice and meditate under Peepal Tree. Therefore this tree was named Bodhi Tree.



Figure 5: Ficus religiosa.

Synonyms – Pippala, Ahant, Pipal tree, Piplo, Jari, Piparo, Pipalo, Pipala, Pipal, Ashwarthan, Arasamaram, Arasan, Arasu, Arara

Botanical name – It consist of dried leaves and fruits of *Ficus religiosa*.

Family: Moraceae

Part used - Leaves, wood, roots, and bark

Chemical Constituent: The bark tree contains beta sitosteryl D glycoside vitamin K, n - actacosanol, methyl olenolate, Lanosterol and

Stigmasterol, the fruit contains about 5% protein having essential amino acid , isoleucine and phenylalanine.

Geographical source - Southern China, Indian subcontinent, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, New Guinea, Australia.

Uses

1. The milky latex obtained from the bark , root ,or fruits of the plant is give in dose of 5-6 drop with honey and ghee to treat impotency and help in conceiving in females.
2. The tender leaves of ashwattha and vata are made into paste and applied over the skin having black heads, pimples, and discoloration to get the original skin tones.
3. The decoction of the bark or root of ficus religiosa is given in a dose of 50-60 ml to treat joint swelling and pain. to control diabetes and treat disease of the vaginal tract.
4. Latex is applied over wounds and bleeding spots to heal wound and control bleeding respectively
5. Gargling with luke warm decoction of the bark of ashwattha is useful to treat mouth and ulcers and gingivitis
6. Antibacterial activity
7. Anthelmintic activity
8. Immunomodulatory activity
9. Antioxidant activity
10. Anticonvulsant activity
11. Hypolipidemic activity
12. Hypoglycemic activity

Marketed formulation

1. Ficus religiosa dilution
2. Ficus religiosa mother tincture
3. Ficus religiosa leaf powder

4. Ficus racemose bark powder
5. Ficus religiosa capsule (500mg)

6. *Achyranthes aspera*

In the month of shravan, pooja is performed by women, in which they garland the goddess, which is made of Aghada and Durva leaves. At some places, the face of the Goddess is placed on the bunch of Aghada leaves.

Leaves are offered to God Ganesha for Ganesh puja on the occasion of Ganesh Chaturthi.

Leaves are used for bathing by the females in “Hartalika Vrat”.



Figure 6: *Achyranthes aspera*.

Common names- Chaff-flower, Prickly chaff flower, Devil's horsewhip, Aghada.

Biological source – It consists of dried root, seeds, leaves, roots, flowers, and fruits of *Achyranthes Aspera*

Family- Amaranthaceae

Parts use – Roots, Seeds, Flowers and Fruits

Geographical sources

Achyranthes Aspera is mainly found in tropical Asian, African, warmer regions. It is also found in Australia and America, Ceylon, Baluchistan. In India, it predominantly grows like a weed on roadsides.

Chemical components of *achyranthen aspera*

The *Achyranthen Aspera* is stated to contain the following major classes of compounds:

- Fatty acids.
- D-glucuronic, Betaine.

- Oleanolic acid, triacontanol.
- Spathulenol, alkaloids.
- Achyranthine, different amino acids.
- Ecdysterone.
- Oleonic acid.
- Bisdesmosidic, triterpenoid-based saponins.
- Spinasterol, dihydroxy ketones.
- n-hexacos-14- enoic.

Nutritional constituents

Achyranthes Aspera plant and seeds are rich in carbohydrates, proteins, and bioactive constituents such as flavonoids, tannins, and saponins that help maintain an individual's overall health.

Traditional uses of *achyranthes aspera*

- The pulp of fresh *Achyranthes Aspera* leaves, and flowering spikes is an effective home remedy for scorpion bites when applied externally, which is believed to paralyze.
- For snake/reptile bites, the seeds are beneficial for ophthalmic diseases and other corneal infections.
- Flowering, elongated spikes mix with little sugar and used in mad dog bites to treat hydrophobia.
- *Achyranthes Aspera* ash loaded with potash has been used for washing clothes.
- Flowers and fruits of *Achyranthes Aspera* are useful for the treatment of menorrhagia.

Medicinal Uses & Benefits of *achyranthes aspera*

- 1) All parts (seeds, roots, leaves) of *Achyranthes Aspera* have been used both traditionally and medicinally; it has a strong unpleasant smell used externally or internally.
- 2) The *Achyranthes Aspera* having expectorant, stomach tonic, laxative, anthelmintic, diuretic, lithotriptic, sudorific, demulcent, **anti-inflammatory**, anticataract, antifungal, antibacterial, hypoglycemic, antihyperlipidemic, antiperiodic, antiasthmatic, hepatoprotective, anti-allergic properties s it aids to treat various health issues.
- 3) *Achyranthes Aspera* plant supplements help remove excess body fat by preventing accumulation in the abdomen; gluteal regions control body weight.

- 4) *Achyranthens Aspera* juice has astringent, anti-inflammatory properties; therefore, it is used in ulcers/wounds for faster healing.
- 5) *Achyranthens Aspera* root paste and juice help to lower the pain, reduce itching, skin rashes in insect bites, and urticaria when applied topically and helpful in earache.
- 6) Daily consumption of *Achyranthens Aspera* supplement powder with honey improves digestion.
- 7) *Achyranthens Aspera* has excellent digestive and appetizing properties.
- 8) In Ayurveda, a unique medicine called *Achyranthens Aspera* (Apamarga ash) is very effective externally for fistula and fissure.
- 9) *Achyranthens Aspera* oil is predominantly used to expel excessive cough from the body & gives relief from cough.
- 10) *Achyranthens Aspera* has purgative quality, which helps to soften stool and lowers the risk of constipation, piles, fistula/fissures.
- 11) When *Achyranthens Aspera* taken orally breaks down calcium oxalate calculi by its Tikshna property, it expels out by increasing urine output (diuretic).
- 12) *Achyranthens Aspera* mix with tankana bhasm and lemon juice. This mixture is used to remove warts, but this procedure can burn the skin. Therefore it is advisable to do this process under doctor consultation.
- 13) *Achyranthens Aspera* is rich in potassium, so it keeps the heart-healthy.

Marketed formulation

1. Bixa (Apamarya powder)
2. Bixa (*Achyranthes* herb powder)
3. Homeopathic medicine mother tincture *achyranthes aspera*

6. Rui

An idol of Lord Ganesha made from the aak plant's root is considered to be very auspicious. A plant that is two or three years old can be uprooted carefully. A statue of Lord Ganesha is to be carved carefully into the root of the plant. This idol can be placed in your pooja room on an auspicious time. If the idol is worshipped regularly, you will be blessed with 'trisukha' or all the joys of life. Clad the Ganesh idol in red clothes and offer red flowers, red sandalwood paste, and Red gems. You can offer ladoos made from bhoong and jiggery. Then, worship Lord Ganesha with the understated Mantra:

Om Vakratundaya Hum

This will shower you with blessings of Lord Ganesha.



Figure 6: *Calotropis gigantea*.

Synonyms - Calotropis, Crown flower or Giant milkweed.

Biological source

It consist of fresh leaves, stem and milk of *Calotropis gigantea*

Family – Apocynaceae

Parts use - Leaves, stem and milk

Geographical source - Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Shrilanka, India, China, Pakistan, Nepal.

Chemical constituents - Calotropis contain many biological active chemical groups including Cardenolides, Steroids, Tannins, Glycosides, Phenols, Turpenoids, Sugars, Flavonoids, Alkaloids and Saponins

Uses

1. **Thread-** Rope is made from stem of the rui plant. After the plant is cut let it dry in the sun for a day or two. This facilitates easy peeling of the green skin of the stem. Flatten and wash it clean, which makes it white. Then separate out fine thin threads from it. This itself is its thread. As this thread does not easily rot in water it is used as a string in fishing tackle.
2. **Paper-** The pulp from the stem of this plant is used in making paper.
3. **Cotton** - It is said that the pods of this plant yield cotton which is even softer and cool in nature than the cotton from the bombax tree.
4. **Colour-** Latex from this plant is used in painting hides of animals.
5. **Glue** - If latex of the rui plant is boiled, then a gluey substance is created which can be used in making rubber.

6. **Ammunition used in fireworks-** Coal from the rui plant being light is used in making ammunition for fireworks.
7. **Manure-** Manure from the rui plant and its leaves help in destroying termites.
8. **Some medicinal properties**
 - **Painkiller:** Rui leaves can be used for a painful area using by applying oil, ghee or castor oil to the leaf.
 - **Earache:** Instill 1 drop of Rui leaf juice into the ear for an earache.'

Mosquito controlling properties

C. gigantea is reported to exhibit mosquito controlling properties against *Culex gelidus* and *Culex tritaeniorhynchus* mosquitoes which serve as vectors for Japanese encephalitis. The aqueous extract of the *C. gigantea* leaves demonstrated significant larvicidal, repellent and ovicidal activity.

7. Kanher

Planting a Kaner plant, also known as Cascabela Thevetia, predominantly yellow Kaner, inside the house is quite auspicious. Although growing a Kaner plant indoors has several advantages, safety measures must be followed due to the plant's toxicity.

The Kaner flower is revered in India as particularly lucky since it spreads good vibes. The Kaner plant is considered highly auspicious to the prosperity of the house by Vastu Shastra specialists. Hinduism holds that Lord Vishnu resides in yellow Kaner, whereas Mata Laxmi is mainly associated with the white Kaner flowers.

Having a Kaner plant inside the house looks quite beautiful and enhances your house's beauty. Kaner is an evergreen plant that blooms throughout the year. So you will see beautiful flowers in your garden all year round. However, care should be taken to keep it away from children as it has poisonous seeds and contains poison inside the stem of the earlobe.

Religious importance of kaner flowers

Its flowers are used for religious purposes in India. For example, its white flowers are offered to Mother Laxmi (goddess of wealth), and Lord Vishnu is believed to reside in yellow Kaner.



Figure 7: Nerium indicum Linn.

Synonyms - Nerium oleander

Biological source – It consists of dried leaves and seeds of oleander of *Nerium indicum* Linn.

Family- Apocynaceae

Parts use - leaves and seeds

Chemical constituents - Polysaccharides, Cardenolides, glycosides and Triter Penoids

Geographical source

It is mainly found in the United States, India, West Indies, also native to the Mediterranean Region including northern Africa, southern Europe.

Use

Heart Conditions, Asthma, Epilepsy, Cancer, painful menstrual periods, leprosy, malaria, and ringworm infection

8. Arjuna

Arjuna is one of the sacred trees of India. It has acquired the social and religious sanctity with the passage of time. It is said that Arjuna has been born of the two sons of Kubair after saint Narada cursed him. The leaves and flowers of this tree are offered to the Lord Vishnu and Lord Ganpati on several religious occasions. It has been used in Ayurvedic formulations since ancient times.



Figure 8: Terminalia arjuna roxb.

Synonyms - Terminalia Arjuna, Arjun tree

Biological source - Arjuna consist of dried stem bark of the Plant known as *terminalia Arjuna Roxb.* It contains not less than 0.02 percentage of Arjungenin on dried basis.

Family - Combrataceae.

Part use – Bark

Geographical source

The tree is common in Indian Peninsula. It is grown by the side of streams and very common in Chotta Nagpur region.

Chemical constituents - Polyphenols, Flavonoids, tannins triterpenoids penoids, Saponins, sterols and minerals.

Uses

- 1) Arjuna bark is used as a Cardiotonic. It reduces angina frequency. it is also styptic, febrifugal and anti dysenteric.
- 2) It possesses diuretic and tonic properties.
- 3) The drug exhibits hypotensive action with vasodilation and decreased heart rate.
- 4) The diuretic activity is due to arjunolic acid.
- 5) Arjuna bark is used extensively in the tanneries and also as a timber

Marketed products

1. Arjuna Powder
2. Arjuna Capsules
3. Arjun Saar
4. Arjun Tea
5. Total Heart Support

9. Datura

Datura will help in calming down the effect of poison in Shiva.

Shiva had drank the Halahala poison that appeared during the churning of ocean (Samudra Manthan).



Figure 9: Datura metel linn.

Synonyms - Devil's trumpet, Moon flower, Jimsonweed, Devil's weed, Thornapples.

Biological source - Datura herb consists of the dried leaves and Flowering tops of *Datura metel linn* and *Daturd metel var.fastuosa*

Family - *Solanaceae*

Parts use – Flowers and leaves

Geographical source - It is found in India, England and other tropical and Sub-tropical Countries.

Chemical constituents - Datura herb contains up to 0.5% of total alkaloids. among which hyoscyine is the main alkaloid while 1-hyoscyamine & atropine are present in very less quantites.

Use - The seeds of Datura are analgesic, anthelmintic and anti-inflammatory and as such, they are used in treatment of stomach and intestinal pain that results from worm infestation, toothache and fever from inflammation.

Marketed products

It is one of the ingredients of the preparations known as Jatifaladi Bati, Jatyadi tail (Baidyanath) and J.P. Massaj oil, Pain kill oil, J.P. Grace oil (Jamuna Pharma).

CONCLUSION

Herbs are staging a comeback and in the present days herbal products represent safety and security as compare to synthetic drug which leads toward research in herbal medicines. The

traditional knowledge may play important role if a holistic approach, Spiritual and involvement and participation of tribes for documentation, preservation and use for the benefit of humankind, before it is lost forever. Kateri Shami, Durva, Bael, Pimple, Aghada, Datura, Arjuna, Kaner, and Rui all are Spiritual herbal plants which enhance the activity of the brain and other body parts. Spiritual herbal drugs used in Indian tradition for the religious but there are many pharmacological activity on various disease and disorder. Some spiritual plants has been studied for their various pharmacological activities like Anti-bacterial, Anti-fungal, Anti-Viral, Anti-wrinkle, anticonvulsant, immunomodulatory, antioxidant, hypoglycemic, hypolipidemic, anthelmintics, and wound healing activities.

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