

Justicia beddomei (C.B. Clarke) Bennet

Synonyms : *Adhatoda beddomei* C.B. Clarke

Family : Acanthaceae

Group : Anti tussive (expectorant)

Parts Used : Root , Leaf, Whole plant

Vernacular Names

English : Malabar nut (small)

Malayalam : Chittadalotakam

Hindi : Adusa



Distribution and habitat: All over India up to an altitude of 2000 m.

Botany: Large evergreen glabrous perennial shrub, 1.2 m in height.

• **Leaves:** Opposite, ovate, lanceolate and short petioled up to 15 cm long, 3.75 cm broad, main nerves about 8 pairs.

• **Flowers:** White with large bracts, flower heads short, dense or condensed spikes.

• **Fruits:** Capsules with a long solid base.

Chemical constituents: Several alkaloids like quinazoline and vasicine are present in this plant.

• Leaves yield essential oil and an alkaloid vasicine.

• Stem and roots contain vasicinol and vasicinone.

• Roots also contain vasicoline, adhatodine, anisotine and vasicolinone.

Uses: Cultivated for medicinal uses, fencing, manure and as an ornamental plant in pots.

• The shrub is the source of the drug *vasaka* well known in the indigenous systems of medicines for bronchitis.

• Vasaka leaves, flowers, fruits and roots are used for treating common cold, cough, whooping cough, chronic bronchitis and asthma. It has sedative, expectorant, antispasmodic and anthelmintic actions.

• The juice of the leaves cures vomiting, thirst, fever, dermatosis, jaundice, phthisis, haematemesis and diseases due to the morbidity of *kapha* and *pitta*.

• The leaf juice is especially used in anaemia and haemorrhage in traditional medicine.

• Flowers and leaves are considered efficacious against rheumatic painful swellings and form a good application to scabies and other skin complaints.

• Many ayurvedic medicines are traditionally prepared out of vasaka like *vasarishtam*, *vasakasavam* and *vasahareethaki*, which are effective in various ailments of respiratory system.

Agrotechnology

Propagation: Commercial propagation is by using 15-20 cm long terminal cuttings planted during April-May into the beds at a spacing of 30x30 cm. When it attains 4-5 leaf stage in two months it is transplanted to the field at a spacing of 60cm X 30cm.

Varieties: Ajagandhi and Vasika

Harvesting: Mature leaves can be harvested after one year. Harvesting of whole plant is done at the end of second or third year. Roots are collected by digging the seed beds. Stems are cut 15 cm above the root. Stems and roots are usually dried and stored.

