1. Introduction to Herbal Medicine


**Herbal Medicine**, sometimes referred to as **Herbalism** or **Botanical Medicine**, is the use of herbs for their therapeutic or medicinal value. An **herb** is a plant or plant part valued for its medicinal, aromatic or savory qualities. **Herb plants** produce and contain a variety of chemical substances that act upon the body.

**Herbal medicine** is the oldest form of **healthcare known** to mankind. **Herbs** had been used by all cultures throughout history. It was an integral part of the development of modern civilization. Primitive man observed and appreciated the great diversity of plants available to him. The plants provided food, clothing, shelter, and medicine. Much of the medicinal use of plants seems to have been developed through observations of wild animals, and by trial and error. As time went on, each tribe added the medicinal power of herbs in their area to its knowledgebase. They methodically collected information on **herbs** and developed well-defined **herbal pharmacopoeias**. Indeed, well into the 20th century much of the pharmacopoeia of scientific medicine was derived from the **herbal** lore of native peoples. Many drugs commonly used today are of **herbal** origin. Indeed, about 25 percent of the prescription drugs dispensed in the United States contain at least one active ingredient derived from plant material. Some are made from plant extracts; others are synthesized to mimic a natural plant compound.

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 4 billion people, 80 percent of the world population, presently use **herbal medicine** for some aspect of primary health care. **Herbal medicine** is a major component in all indigenous peoples' traditional medicine and a common element in **Ayurvedic**, **homeopathic**, **naturopathic**, traditional oriental, and Native American Indian medicine. WHO notes that of 119 plant-derived pharmaceutical medicines, about 74 percent are used in modern medicine in ways that correlated directly with their traditional uses as plant medicines by native cultures. Major pharmaceutical companies are currently conducting extensive research on plant materials gathered from the rain forests and other places for their potential medicinal value.
Substances derived from the plants remain the basis for a large proportion of the commercial medications used today for the treatment of heart disease, high blood pressure, pain, asthma, and other problems. For example, ephedra is a herb used in Traditional Chinese Medicine for more than two thousand years to treat asthma and other respiratory problems. Ephedrine, the active ingredient in ephedra, is used in the commercial pharmaceutical preparations for the relief of asthma symptoms and other respiratory problems. It helps the patient to breathe more easily.

Another example of the use of a herbal preparation in modern medicine is the foxglove plant. This herb had been in use since 1775. At present, the powdered leaf of this plant is known as the cardiac stimulant digitalis to the millions of heart patients it keeps alive worldwide.

Herbal Medicine can be broadly classified into various basic systems: Traditional Chinese Herbalism, which is part of Traditional Oriental Medicine, Ayurvedic Herbalism, which is derived from Ayurveda, and Western Herbalism, which originally came from Greece and Rome to Europe and then spread to North and South America.

Chinese and Ayurvedic Herbalism have developed into highly sophisticated systems of diagnosis and treatment over the centuries. Western Herbalism is today primarily a system of folk medicine.

Interest in the United States had been growing in the recent years from the reported success stories from the use of herbs. For example, St. John's Wort is widely used in the treatment of mild depression without the need for Prozac. St. John's Wort does not have the side effects such as that of Prozac. There are some Ayurvedic herbs that are very useful for reducing cholesterol, diabetes etc. Similarly the popularity of Ginseng and Ginkgo biloba (ginkgo) is rising due to its beneficial effects.

2. Neem


Neem which belongs to family Meliaceae, has a botanical name Azadirachta Indica. It grows in tropical and semi tropical regions and is widely found in Burma, India and Pakistan. This is a very fast growing, evergreen tree which reaches the height of 15 to 20 meters.
Neem is known for its immeasurable medicinal properties and is used as a main ingredient in many home remedies. Commending the medicinal properties of Neem, numerous Sanskrit names have been coined by our Ayurveda acharyas. Few of them are mentioned below:

1. It is known as Nimba as it boosts health
2. It is praised as Pichumarda as it destroys skin diseases.
3. As it is used to ward off evil powers that harm our body, it is known as Arishta

Chemical composition of Neem

Neem tree has numerous medicinal properties by virtue of its chemical compounds. Seeds of the Neem tree contain the highest concentration of Azadirachtin. Apart from Azadirachtin, salannin, gedunin, azadirone, nimbin, nimbidine, nimbicidine, nimbinol, etc., are other important liminoids of neem.

Uses of Neem in Horticulture

Neem has been the most traditionally used plant in India, Pakistan and Africa to protect grains and cereals from pests. Fresh Neem leaves are mixed with grains and cereals before storing. A paste of fresh Neem leaves is rubbed against the wall of large mud bins or gunny bags in which the grains and cereals are stored. Some times a thick layer of dry Neem leaves are spread over grains. Neem oil extracted from seeds acts as best bio-pesticide. Jute sacks treated with Neem oil or extracts of Neem are used to store food grains. Neem oil is a very cheap and effective household pesticide to protect grains and legumes from pests. Neem is being used to protect stored roots and tubers from potato moth.

Azadirachtin is available in high concentration in Neem seeds. It is used as 'botanical pesticide' which is environmentally friendly. It prevents insects from feeding on plants and regulates the growth of insects. Neem extracts do not harm the insects like bees, spiders and butterflies which help in pollination.

Medicinal Properties of Neem

The Neem tree has many medicinal uses. The chemical compounds present in Neem have anti-inflammatory, anti-arthritic, antipyretic, hypoglycaemic, anti-fungal, spermicidal, anti-malarial, anti-bacterial and Diuretic properties.

Flower, leaves, bark and seeds of Neem are used in home remedies and in preparation of medicines. Bark of Neem acts as antipyretic and helps to reduce fever. Flowers are used in intestinal disorders. Juice from fresh leaves is very helpful in treating skin diseases, wounds and obesity. Oil from Neem seeds is used in arthritis, skin diseases and muscular sprains. Neem is very effective in treating gum diseases.

The Neem is proved to be beneficial in treating skin diseases because of its antibiotic, antifungal and blood purifying properties. According to Ayurveda principles vitiated Kapha and Pitta cause skin diseases. Neem pacifies vitiated kapha and pitta, thus helps to cure skin ailments. It promotes wound healing as it is antibacterial and astringent.

In psoriasis it reduces itching, irritation, roughness of skin and heals the psoriatic patches. In same way it heals eczema too. It reduces infection and inflammation of acne.

Neem helps to maintain the health of scalp skin and prevents dandruff.
Due to its detoxifying properties it helps to keep organ systems healthy, especially circulatory, digestive, respiratory and urinary systems. Scientific studies have revealed that Neem reduces blood sugar level. Hence its usage supports diabetic patients to keep their blood sugar level in control. Diabetes impairs blood circulation and causes gangrene in lower extremities. Numerous scientific researches have highlighted the role of Neem in keeping circulatory system healthy, thus reducing the chances of gangrene. Recent studies have shown that Neem reduces blood cholesterol level and keeps the heart healthy.

Home remedies with Neem

1. Apply crushed fresh leaves of Neem on acne. In case of body acne mix fine paste of fresh Neem leaves in little water and smear this mixture on back, chest and shoulders.
2. In itching, application of Neem oil on affected areas helps. Boil Neem leaves in a big bowl of water and mix this in bathing water. This reduces body itch.
3. Massaging Neem oil to scalp removes head lice and prevents formation of dandruff.
4. Mix dry Neem powder, shikakai and amla in water and apply this as pack on head. This pack has to be kept for 45 minutes and washed off later. This prevents hair-loss and dandruff. Fresh Neem leaves can also be used instead of dry Neem powder.
5. A freshly prepared paste of turmeric, Neem and sesame seeds is recommended in Ayurveda for fungal infection between toes.
6. Fumigating the house with smoke of dried Neem leaves in evenings for 1-2 minutes is an excellent Ayurvedic method to keep mosquitoes away.

Neem in Household

Neem flower pachidi is prepared from roasted Neem flower and is a famous dish in South India which is prepared during Ugadi. Neem flower rasam improves digestion and is very popular in Andhra and Tamilnadu.

Extract of skin friendly Neem is being used in manufacturing bathing soaps, hair gels, body lotions etc. These products are gaining popularity in market.

3. Bael tree

Aegle marmelosa

Bael is one of the most important plants used in Ayurveda and Tibetan medicine. It considers sacred in Hindu religion. The Bael tree is native to northern India, but widely found throughout Indian Peninsula, Burma, Thailand and Sri Lanka, and is also known
as “Bilwa” in Ayurveda. It is a moderately sized, slender, aromatic tree and grows naturally in Indian forests.

From the nutritional point of view, the fruit of the tree is a rich source of pectin, protein and contains substantial amounts of magnesium, iron, calcium and phosphorous. The pulp of the fruit, when diluted with water and when required amount of sugar and tamarind is added, forms a delicious cool drink, popular in northern parts of India.

Ayurveda recommends all parts of the Bael tree i.e., the root, leaves, stem, bark and fruit, as having medicinal value. The fruit of the tree, whether ripe or unripe, is used in curing dysentery and diarrhea. It is also said to aid digestion and improve appetite. Ripe bael fruit could be used as an excellent laxative. Though for eating it is not good as the ripe fruit is difficult to digest hence it disbalances the doshas.

A decoction made out of the root and bark of bael tree is used in treating fever. The bael root could also prove a useful home remedy for getting rid of ear problems. It also balances Vata dosha. An infusion made of bael leaves is effective in treatment of peptic ulcer. Fresh bael leaves also help in treating diabetes.

Parts in use: the root, leaves, stem, bark and fruit

System: digestive

Action: antiviral, anthelmintic, astringent, carminative

Indications: diarrhea, intestinal worms, cholera

Warnings: mature fruits are hard to digest and can imbalance the doshas

4. Sweet Flag

The first mention of the Sweet flag was found in a book about herbs, written by one of the Chinese emperors in 3700 BC, the author respectfully calls him "Chang-fu" (literally: "prolonging life").

Medical properties of the Sweet flag described such luminaries of medicine, as Hippocrates, Galen, and Avicenna, they claimed that "this plant treats hysteria and wounds from snake bites, useful for irregular menstruation and excites passion".
During thousands of years the root of Sweet flag is used in India as a remedy, ancient Greeks and Romans knew about it, as well as the ancient Persians and Jews, who used it as a spice plant. Till now in the countries of East dried and pounded into powder roots are a favorite spice.

Sweet flag is also mentioned in all ancient Ayurvedic and some Tantric texts. Very widely used in yoga practices. Tibetan doctors have advised during the flu epidemic before leaving the house to chew pieces of calamus roots to enhance the body’s resistance.

Calamus roots are chewed for disinfection of oral cavity and strengthening the gums. Extracts of the roots used to make dental powders and pastes.

In Ayurveda, Sweet flag belongs to the"higher" herbs. This is one of the most recognized remedy in Ayurveda since the Vedic times. And such estimation is given not casually – Sweet flag is one of the best herbal for a rejuvenation of a brain and nervous system which it recovers and clears.

The Calamus roots also enhances the formation of brain tissue, Ojas, cleanses the blood and lymph systems. Dilutes the blood. Amplifies and accelerates the process of transformation of adipose tissue, thereby reducing its amount. Normalizes and slightly accelerates the process of transformation of the seven tissues. Promotes the rational use of energy, normalize the movement of Prana through pranic channels, thus clears the subtle canals and removes the clogging.

The Sweet flag is a powerful anti-aging remedy for Vata, in less degree for Kapha; it also calms Vata, in this view it is useful when there is imbalance of Vata.

Along with other "higher" Ayurvedic herb - Gotu Kola it is the best herb that positively affects the mind. With this purpose, Sweet flag and Gotu Kola can be mixed.

In my experience, there was a case of successful treatment of acute arthritis with the help of Sweet flag. You can prepare the ointment consisting of 2 tablespoons finely ground powder of Sweet flag and 100 grams of Ghee (purified butter). The Sweet flag powder is placed into the melted butter and stir constantly until it becomes solid. Ointment applies at night to the affected joints.

High therapeutic effect of this simple structure due to the fact that both the Sweet flag, and Ghee, are highly effective remedies, lowering Vata. Combined together, these two substances significantly increase the effect of each other.

The only thing you should always remember - it's about the right of Ayurvedic diagnosis. Arthritis is most often caused by an excited Vata, and in this case the described composition will have a high therapeutic effect. But in the process of treatment Pitta can begin to go out of balance, which can bring up fever, redness and inflammation of the joints.

It is good to use the powder of Sweet flag for inhalation in the nose. This procedure almost immediately relieves drowsiness, fatigue, clears the mind and gives courage. Ayurvedic sources claim that the inhalation of powder into the nose brings the person out from fainting. Also by just inhaling the powder you can effectively treat the stuffiness in nose and nasal polyps.

Parts in use: the root

Taste: Pungent, bitter, astringent (warming). Aftertaste is sweet. The plant is slightly toxic.

Effect: Stimulating, revitalizing, expectorant, decongestant, strengthens nerves, spasolytic, emetic.

Indications: colds, coughs, asthma, headaches caused by inflammation of the sinuses, sinusitis, arthritis, epilepsy, shock, coma, memory loss, deafness, hysteria, neuralgia

Cautions: Various bleeding, including nose and hemorrhoids.

5. Aloe Vera

The Aloe Vera is one of few plants, that has pure bitter taste, but it also contains other tastes. From the point of medical properties, bitter taste (along with astringent) is the most valuable, in aloe plant it is expressed more strongly than in others. Bitter taste is useful to treat acute fever conditions, the infected wounds and traumas.

Fresh aloe juice counterbalances all three doshas, but first of all it is useful for Pitta. This action is connected with the property of aloe to strengthen Agni (digestive fire), thus improving digestion that helps in cleaning an organism from toxins. Aloe as clean bitterness, is used in specialized treatment for removing Ama (toxins), from body tissues especially from the blood. In order to cleanse aloe can be used in times of fasting.

In this case, the aloe is suitable for all doshas, but for Vata types it must be applied in small quantities. Besides, Aloe is the most suitable tonic for Pitta.

The Aloe Vera plant refers to Sattvic products and can be applied in a Sattvic diet by the people engaged in spiritual development.

When constipation occurs Aloe Vera is the perfect laxative, but in dried form, in the powder, it is good for all dosha types. For this purpose fresh aloe juice (1-2 teaspoons) taken 3 times a day. Aloe is not only helps with constipation, but also moisturizes the intestinal mucosa, which is very important in such cases. Fresh aloe has a mild, light laxative action. Results of Virechany (using laxatives) are always quite noticeable, despite the stunning simplicity of this method.
Despite its laxative properties, aloe can be used when diarrhea occurs for human of Pitta constitution. It should be applied at the beginning of diarrhea.

Fresh aloe juice can be used instead of the famous Ayurvedic remedy - Trifali. 2-3 teaspoons should be taken 2-3 times daily, preferably with a small amount of spices - ginger, black pepper and turmeric.

**Fresh aloe juice useful for hemorrhoids of Pitta type.** This variant is characterized by hemorrhoids redness, swelling, outflow of blood or pus.

**Also fresh aloe juice is used as antiemetic and anti nausea (sickness) remedy of the Pitta dosha imbalance.**

However, you must always remember that dried Aloe (powder) on the contrary has the strongest emetic effect.

Aloe juice is perhaps the most accessible, and at the same time an effective treatment for gastric ulcer.

Aloe also perfectly tones up the liver and can be used separately or in combination with other remedies to treat diseases of the liver.

In particular, it concerns the treatment of acute and chronic hepatitis, gallstones and cholecystitis. A dosage is the same – 2-3 teaspoons 2-3 times a day. To treat hepatitis it is recommended to add a turmeric and coriander to the aloe juice. Same for treating the gallbladder.

Aloe is useful for candidiasis and intestinal parasites. Apply inside. Dry powder of aloe has the stronger antiparasitic action.

Along with other remedies the aloe juice has a beneficial effect in obesity. At the same time people of Pitta constitution can also use aloe juice for the treatment of underweight. Thus you need to understood that aloe is not struggling with some specific symptoms, but establishes the processes of digestion in general. Due to this, people of overweight lose weight and on the contrary skinny gain weight to the norm.

**Aloe juice is useful for heart diseases, blood and vessels and for people with Pitta imbalance. In particular, used for hypertension, hypotension (in combination with saffron or turmeric), and bleeding.**

If injuries occur aloe not only helps to stop bleeding, but also heals wounds without scarring.

Aloe juice gives good results in treating anemia for all constitutional types.

Aloe is also used to treat edema in humans of Pitta type. In this case, use such herbs as gokshura, corn stigmas, lemon grass and coriander mixed with aloe juice.

Aloe is used in the treatment of diabetes. For this, 1-3 grams of turmeric is mixed with aloe gel, and take 2-3 times a day. The composition is particularly effective in the initial stages of the disease.

**Aloe is used to treat impotence, especially of the Pitta imbalance.** Moreover, despite the fact that many sources indicate that aloe - a female tonic, for men it is no less effective. The women can apply aloe to treat all the problems of the female reproductive system. When the menstrual cycle is out of norm the composition of one-
half teaspoon of turmeric and 1-2 tsp of aloe juice is very useful. Aloe juice used inside is effective for menopause, endometritis and endometriosis.

At the same time it must be remembered that the use of aloe in pregnancy should be avoided. But after a spontaneous miscarriage aloe juice is useful for the purification of the uterus. Aloe juice can help prepare a woman’s body for pregnancy, and is also used in female infertility.

**Good action has aloe in infectious lesions.** And it can be applied to the ulcer or taken orally. For example, when boils take 2 tablespoons of aloe juice 3 times a day.

**Aloe is useful for arthritis and gout** – take orally. For the treatment of gout aloe is better to mix with turmeric.

Parts in use: gel-like juice (fresh or dried in powder form)

Taste: bitter, pungent, sweet

Taste after digestion (vipak): sweet

Energy: Cooling

Effect on Doshas: VPK = (juice), powder excites Vata except in very small doses

Tissue: effect on all tissues

Systems: circulatory, digestive, female reproductive, excretory

Action: improves metabolism, bitter tonic, rejuvenating, mesyachnogonnoe, laxative, healing

Indications: fever, constipation, obesity, inflammation of the skin, swollen glands, conjunctivitis, bursitis, jaundice, hepatitis, enlarged liver and spleen, herpes, venereal disease, amenorrhea, dysmenorrhea, menopause, vaginitis, tumors, intestinal parasites.

Contraindications: pregnancy, uterine bleeding
The milk of cows is considered to possess the essence of all plants and Ghee is the essence of milk...

**Divine qualities of Ghee:**

- **Ghee builds the aura, protects against contact with defiled personalities**, becoming a kind of Kavach (defense, literally translated from Sanskrit as armor) for the whole day. This is especially necessary for children and women.

- **Ghee manifests itself through the energy of the Sun**, due to this it heals the body and soul. Underlying cause of the cosmic manifestation is the Sun, so Ghee is the foundation of cooking and digestion. Ghee gives the greatest impact on Sunday. Ghee gives joy because the Sun associates with joyful mood and pleasure of wishing happiness to others. **Warms the body and soul, makes all the organs soft.**

- **Ghee builds up the internal juices of the body - Rasa**, which are destroyed by aging and increases the most refined element of digestion - Shukra or Ojas - the underlying basis of all immunity and the “essence of all bodily tissues”. Ghee is considered a single most **Ojas producing food on Earth.**

- **Ghee gives power to act**, therefore, is essentially masculine food. Also the prosperity in the family may depend on whether the husband eats Ghee. A man becomes kind and reliable, what is very important for the family.

- **Ghee makes the willpower stronger**. Gives the desire to continue development, despite all the difficulties and imaginary problems. Gives the feeling of joy from work.
- **Ghee purifies the consciousness** of women, making her chaste and men, making him faithful. The voice of conscience is clearly audible. It is therefore difficult to treat someone bad or say nonsense.

- **Ghee is known to increase intelligence** - Dhi, refine the intellect - Buddhi and improve the memory - Smriti. Ghee cleans the mind, thus gives a perception of the Absolute Truth; it clears the mind of illicit desires and makes it very strong. Gives will to understand the Cosmic laws. **Ghee gives spiritual force** - the energy for spiritual development, rather than degradation.

- Although **Ghee kindles or increases the digestive fire** - Agni, on which all nutrition depends, it does so without aggravating Pitta - the elemental functioning of fire within the body. In fact, Ghee cools the body, essential in much of today’s world in which everything is overheating.

- **Ghee burns toxins directly into the body** through a combination of oils and spices (masala). The ingestion of Ghee is used in Panchakarma specifically to first penetrate into and then dissolve ama in the dhatus, allowing the wastes to be then carried to the intestinal tract and then expelled. Thus, **Ghee brings up a natural desire to eat clean food.**

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**Ayurvedic qualities of Ghee:**

**Ghee is known as a substance that gives longevity.** This is because it has opposite qualities (heavy, slow, oily, liquid, dense, soft), and thus pacifying effects, to the light, dry and rough qualities of Vata dosha. It is the increase of the qualities of Vata that are synonymous with aging. Ghee, in a very sure and steady way, slows the aging process by balancing the living one.

Ghee has the quality of snigda, oiliness, and unctuousness. It is smooth, lubricated and nurturing. **Ghee is thought to make the voice soft and melodious.**

Ghee has the quality of mrdu, softness. In Ayurvedic Panchakarma treatments, Ghee is the oil used on the eyes. In Netra Basti, a small dam is built around the eyes and filled with warm Ghee. Then, you open your eyes to its soothing softness. It seems after that treatment, that you see the world though a soft diaphanous curtain of love and loveliness.

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**Healing properties of Ghee:**

In ancient India, wells full of Ghee were especially for those who suffered wounds.

- **Ghee is known for the quality of Ropana** - healing, and its effectiveness in facilitating recovery from wounds.
  - In Ayurveda, when a person has a chronic peptic ulcer or gastritis, **Ghee is used to heal that ulcer inside the intestinal tract.**
  - **Ghee works wondrously on bedsores** for the elderly or debilitated.
  - **It can be applied for broken bones and bruises.**
  - **It is highly effective for all sorts of skin rashes.** Used on the skin, Ghee softens and strengthens, protects and nourishes - **Ghee is an exquisite facial moisturizer.**
  - **Ghee is excellent for scrapes and both chemical and heat or fire burns.**
  - **Ghee can be used in the eyes for tiredness or fatigue.** Ghee is excellent for a gargle-gandush, **to improve the health of the teeth and gums.** In India it is said
that if a few drops of ghee are placed in the nostrils then nosebleed can be checked. If this is done twice in a day, then headache can be relieved.

For generations, Indians have used Ghee for cooking and as an added measure on top of their food and as a medicine. **Ghee is excellent for cooking stir-frying.** Ghee has one of the highest flash points of all oils and is very difficult to burn. In India, it is said that food is incomplete without the use of Ghee.

In India, medicinal ghee is passed on from one generation to the next. It was used for old and young, for new babies - Mothers in India will massage their children with Ghee, and for those in the last days of their life.

**Ghee is beneficial for body massage - Abhyanga.** Apply ghee all over the body, rubbing into head, chest, limbs, joints and orifices. This will bypass the digestive system and allow the qualities of Ghee to penetrate directly into the deeper tissues.

Western science has discovered that massaging the skin creates endorphins or peptides, which enhance the body’s immune system. Peptides are thought to be the vehicle that the mind and body use to communicate with each other, a literal chemistry of emotion. According to the Charak Samhita, **regular Abhyanga slows the aging process.**

**Ghee is used as a carrier or “yogavahi” for herbs and bhasmas** because of its supreme penetrating qualities and thus ability to carry these substances deep into the dhatus or tissues.

**Ghee can be used as a bath oil.** Take two tablespoons of Ghee and mix with several drops of an essential oil of your choice.

**Ghee is used in Purvakarma, (early Panchakarma) where a small amount of Ghee is taken first thing in the morning by the practitioner to oleate the internal organs and “dissolve” the ama or toxic wastes in the tissues, allowing them to be carried to the digestive tract for elimination. One or two teaspoons first thing in the morning followed immediately with hot water will promptly produce a bowel movement. It will also warm the body quickly. Two spoonfuls of Ghee in warm (non-homogenized) milk before bedtime is soothing to the nerves and lubricates the intestines and facilitates a bowel movement in the morning.**

Those with obesity should be very frugal in their use of Ghee and those with high ama should not take Ghee at all.

**How Ghee is Made:**

**Ghee is the most refined end product of milk.** For this reason, always use the best milk/butter you can find. Today very little butter is churned the old fashioned way. Vaidya (an old ayurvedic healer) says about what difference this makes. He said that butter made without churning is lacking in a quality of Fire - Agni.

There is one very important difference in the way Ghee was and is made in India. **The Indians start out with milk from a cow, just like in America. But, they do not let the cream rise to the top and skim it off as we do in the West. Instead, and here comes the key difference from western way of preparation, - they culture the milk with yogurt, allowing it to sit for 4-5 hours, just before it becomes completely soured. Then they churn the whole milk. This culturing with yogurt introduces another form of Fire - Agni into the substance of refining the milk into butter and then Ghee. Nowadays even in India it is very hard to find high quality and pure cow Ghee. The commercial milk, cream and butter there are now homogenized and pasteurized or now...
ultra-pasteurized. (This is a process whereby milk is heated to a higher temperature than pasteurization for a shorter period of time. This kills and destroys various living substances/enzymes in the milk thus prolonging shelf life. Ultra pasteurized milk can keep unrefrigerated for over a month). According to Ayurvedic Vaidyas, all of these factors increase the Vata (air and ether/destructive, catabolic, drying, rough) qualities in what was originally a very Kapha (earth and water, building, oily, tonifying, anabolic) substance - milk. Some of these processes, like homogenization, make the milk, and thus the cream and butter, indigestible. One of the things you can look for in milk and cream is the sticky quality - picchila, one of the gunas of Kapha. It will be lacking in processed milk products.

So, once you have obtained your butter, you heat it in a stainless steel or enamel pot, bringing it to a boil. I believe that it is best to make your Ghee in stainless steel heavy pots, rather than aluminum because of the toxicity. It is best even to avoid thin stainless steel. This is because a heavier pot will distribute the heat of the fire more evenly, surrounding the Ghee. Always try to use real fire rather than an electric range. Real fire is a superior (more sattvic) way to cook food. And of course it is most important to create and enjoy a beautiful and positive environment when you are making Ghee.

Once the Ghee begins to boil, turn it down to the lowest flame at which it will continue to boil. As it boils, moisture evaporates off it and it will begin to “clarify”- the butter will turn from cloudy yellowish liquid to a more golden color. Whitish cloudy milk solids will rise to the top and sink to the bottom. Do not stir it. After an hour and half to several hours, depending on the amount and the size of the pot and the amount of Ghee compared to the flame, your Ghee will be ready. The moment Ghee is “ready” is very critical. If you cook the Ghee too little, you will be left with moisture in the Ghee and it will lack the exquisite taste and qualities that it can develop, also, it will tend to spoil or sour. If you cook it too much, it will burn and impart a certain nutty flavor to the Ghee. This does not ruin the Ghee at all, but it is to be noticed, so that over time you can capture the “perfect” Ghee to be experienced between these two “extremes”.

After the Ghee is done, you skim off the top light crust of whitish milk solids. These and the heavier ones at the bottom of the pot are traditionally used to make sweets. Children in India love them and always plead with their Mothers to have the leftovers when Ghee is made.

Then, you pour the golden, sweet-smelling liquid through layered cheesecloth - to catch any last impurities into a bottle, leaving the slightly burned milk solids (caramelized lactose) on the bottom of the pot you cooked it in (Ghee has no lactose or milk sugars in it). Be sure not to close the glass jar into which you pour the hot Ghee until it comes to room temperature. The reason for this is that there should not be any moisture from condensation that may form on the inside of the jar. It is moisture that spoils Ghee, allowing a mold to grow and causing it to go bad. This is the reason that you always use a clean and dry spoon to take your Ghee out of its container. It is also a reason not to refrigerate your Ghee. One, because it is not necessary and two, it causes condensation to form inside the jar as you take it in and out of the refrigerator.

**When is it better to make Ghee:**

It is best to make Ghee on the waxing fortnights of the moon as the moon represents the Mother and nurturing and all the best qualities of milk and butter are energized at this time. Regarding time and season, the quality of Ghee will change as the time of year and the diet of the cows change. This will change the quality of the milk, butter
and Ghee. I have noticed that the more the cows graze in the fields on grass, the more yellow is the Ghee. This “yellow” is the result of more chlorophyll in the butter. The making of Ghee is a very beautiful and peaceful experience. The sound of softly boiling butter, the pouring of the thick golden liquid into bottles; this wonderful smell permeates the space.

In India, Ghee is made from both Cow and Buffalo milk. If we consider the qualities of both of these animals, we can see why the Ghee of Cows is to be preferred. If we look at Cows have a more moderate make-up of fat. The Ghee of a Cow is in liquid form at body temperature. The Ghee of a Buffalo is still slightly solid. Buffalo will eat almost any food, even spoiled food, while Cows in their natural environment, will turn away from such fare. Buffalos are often quite dirty and smell more strongly than Cows. Finally there is the striking difference in temperament between a Cow and Buffalo. Cows are far gentler in nature. Buffalos are comparatively more stubborn and aggressive. Because of these qualities and more, Buffalo milk and Ghee are considered more dulling - Tamasic, while Cow milk and Ghee are considered more pure and purifying - Sattvic.
Furthermore, the Indian peasants seek the nourishment of Buffalo Ghee, which has a far higher fat content than cow Ghee.

Cow Ghee is used in lamps in temples and pujas all over India. It is said that the light of a Ghee lamp is more beautiful and brilliant than any other light, it clears the space around you. The effect will be like in the apartment where all the windows are overlooking the Sun. Also the light of burning Ghee is said to ward off negativity and evil influence.

Ghee is nourishing and healing. Ghee is steady and dependable and always supportive of life and living. The two essential traits, which we need to have if we want to achieve the never-ending Blissful state, are:
- Truthfulness:
  Ghee gives desire to speak only truth, so a person gets inclination to comprehend the truth, because without understanding the Absolute Truth he can’t be really honest.
- Sincerity:
  Ghee gives potency to perceive knowledge as it is, without cunning and guile.

Enjoy The Nature’s Most Precious Nectar!
May your life be happy and healthy!

7. Anis
Anis is one of the oldest medicinal plants. Ancient Romans and Greeks knew about its healing properties, it was mentioned in the writings of Avicenna and Hippocrates. They wrote that Anise freshens breath, rejuvenates the body. Anise plant placed by the head cleans the air and helps against the nightmares.

The Anise fruits have a stimulating effect on motor and secretory functions of the digestive system, have expectorant and mild disinfectant action. It has spasmolytic effect on gastric and intestinal colic. Anis helps to treat inflammation of the kidneys and bladder, removes the sand out of the urinary tract.

In folk medicine, the infusion of the seeds (anise tea) is used as antipyretic, diuretic, spasmolytic remedy.
Since ancient times, tea with anise is used as a sedative. Infusion of seeds increases the amount of milk in nursing mothers.
A mixture of mashed fruit with egg white treats burns. To treat skin diseases the roots are used, and to treat the scurvy - anise oil. Rinsing the eyes with anise improves eyesight. Also the infusion of anise and saffron with wine reduces inflammation of the eyes.

The presence of essential in aniseed makes it an excellent antiseptic expectorant, which makes the anise oil and fruits successfully treat cough, bronchitis, whooping cough, catarrh of the upper respiratory tract, as well as laryngitis, tracheitis, and other respiratory diseases.

Anis also helps to treat intestinal bleeding, painful menstruation, diarrhea, when abdomen is distended, indigestion of nervous origin, nervous vomiting, migraine-related digestive disorders, as well as dizziness, palpitation, asthma. Known as a good remedy for scurvy and excellent diuretic.

Caution: the seeds of Semina Anisi vulgaris stimulate mucous membranes of the stomach, causing a miscarriage, increase the secretion of breast milk.

Action: Anis has carminative, antispasmodic, anesthetic, expectorant, stimulant action. Spicy-sweet aroma and taste gives human an optimism, makes him a diplomatic, improves mental performance, increases the ability to adapt. Anise increases Pitta dosha and reduce Vata and Kapha.
The smell of anise kills insects: head lice, bedbugs, moths, cockroaches, mites and bumblebees.

8. Asafoetida

Asafoetida get its name from the Persian aza, for mastic or resin, and the Latin foetidus, for stinking. It is a gum that is from the sap of the roots and stem of the ferula species, a giant fennel that exudes a vile odour. Early records mention that Alexander the Great carried this “stink finger” west in 4 BC. It was used as a spice in ancient Rome, and although not native to India, it has been used in Indian medicine and cookery for ages. It was believed that asafoetida enhanced singers voices. In the days of the Mughal aristocracy, the court singers if Agra and Delhi would eat a spoonful of asafoetida with butter and practice on the banks of the river Yamuna.

The Persian philosopher and physician Avicenna in “The Canon of Medicine” wrote about the healing properties of Asafoetida: "It helps from herpes, is good for the treatment of external and internal abscesses. "Kasyapa-Samhita describes: "A small
piece of resin, hanged over a child's neck, soothes and protects him from many infectious diseases."

It was from the Indians who wrote once chief treatise on love "Kama Sutra", the glory of Asafoetida as a very useful spice spread over the world. The same properties are mentioned in the treatises on Tibetan medicine, claiming that this spice removes the anxiety in the heart and rejuvenates the organs, from the ravages of the old age ...".

In ancient times, they used to say that Asafoetida can cure indigestion even if a horse has it, also eliminates the headaches, has a calming effect on the nervous system and promotes the work of the intestine.

Since ancient times, with her help people also got rid of ear pain; if a small piece of Asafoetida wrapped in cotton wool to put in the ear, the pain will soon calm down.

Today Asafoetida stands high in Persia and India's esteem, where they almost don't use garlic.

The smell and taste of Asafoetida is appalling and very persistent, but if you fry it in butter, the smell becomes pleasant and makes you enjoy your food. Because of the odor Asafoetida should be stored in airtight containers and used in microscopic doses.

In medicine, Asafoetida is used to treat arthritis, sciatica, degenerative disc disease; it restores the hormonal function of adrenal glands and gonads. Asafoetida also helps to treat hysteria, it has antispasmodic, sedative, laxative and carminative properties.

In veterinary medicine it is used against intestinal and skin parasites.

The main therapeutic component of Asafoetida is dried in air lactic juice (gum), derived from plant roots. Asafoetida reduces Vata and Kapha and increases Pitta.

Spice Description:
Asafoetida is a hard resinous gum, grayish-white when fresh, darkening with age to yellow, red and eventually brown. It is sold in blocks or pieces as a gum and more frequently as a fine yellow powder, sometimes crystalline or granulated. Bouquet: a pungent smell of rotting onions or sulfur. The smell dissipates with cooking. Flavour: on its own, extremely unpleasant, like concentrated rotten garlic. When cooked, it adds an onion-like flavour.

9. Basil
Ocimum // / Tulasi/ Tulsi

In Ayurvedic medicine for thousands of years Tulasi used as one of the main medicinal plants that have great healing power. Tulasi is described in the main text on Ayurveda by Charaka called “Charaka Samhita”, and is also mentioned in the Rig Veda. It is believed that Tulasi has adaptogenic qualities, leads to the harmony of bodily functions and helps to overcome stress. Tulasi has a strong odor, astringent taste and is considered the "elixir", having the ability to increase life expectancy.

Basil is considered the most sacred after the Lotus plant in India, moreover it has pure Sattvic properties. Basil reveals the mind and heart, gives the energy of divine love and devotion. By virtue of this plant it is associated with the god Vishnu. It strengthens the faith, compassion and clarity of mind. Basil can also be used to restore energy flows and aura; hence it is also used to treat insanity.

The rosary is possible to make from its stems. It gives the divine protection, cleanses the aura and strengthens the immune system. According to the legend, basil contains the seed of Shiva, which confers the power of pure consciousness. Basil as a houseplant is recommended in each house to cleanse the living space.

The famous medieval physician Avicenna recommended basil for food and for medicinal purposes - it is "driving the urine, expels wind and breaks phlegm, treats diseases of the chest and strengthens the heart."

Basil is useful for treating colds and flu, as a diaphoretic and febrifuge. It removes excess Kapha from the respiratory tract and lungs, hence increasing the Prana, Sharpens perception, removes Vata from the colon, improves the absorbability of nutrients, strengthens the nervous tissue, improves memory. To clarify the mind it is used as a drink with honey. If to use fresh basil juice external, it treats fungal infections.

At high Vata dosha basil is used through the nose as a powder, decoction, or mixed with medicated oil or butter Ghee. Basil is effective in the treatment of the excessed Kapha. However, basil increases Pitta.

Basil refers to detoxifying herbs that are used to cleanse the body of Ama (toxins). In this regard, basil is used to treat disorders of the colon.

Basil can be used in treatment of hemorrhoids with a disbalance of Vata dosha. Basil is also effective as an antiemetic.
For the treatment of candidiasis in the background of an imbalance of Vata basil is recommended as a spice that is added to food.

To treat all kinds of cold basil is used as a tea or in powder with honey or butter Ghee. Especially for Pitta, in this case, basil is mixed in equal parts with sandalwood and peppermint - 2.3 tsp mixture brew boiling water (1 cup) and drink every 2-3 hours.

If menstrual irregularities 1/4-1/2 tsp basil mixed with 1-2 tsp aloe juice to take 2 times a day.

Tea made from basil can be used in all types of fevers. Tea made from basil helps to treat headaches caused by stagnation in the head (an inflammation of the sinuses, for example) or caused by colds phenomena.

Basil is a mild spice, so not only adults but also children can use it.

Basil effective in the treatment of nervous disorders, as well as it clarifies the mind and purifies the nerves. It is good to use basil as incense for Vata and Kapha.

In alternative medicine dry and fresh basil is also used for soothing aromatic baths, instead of snuff, drink a decoction if coughs, headaches, inflammation of the bladder occurs.

Tulasi also protects against radial sickness and cataract.

Part used: herb

Taste: spicy

Taste after digestion (vipak): acute

Energy (virya): warming

Acts on the tissue: plasma, blood, bone marrow, nervous, reproductive

Acts on the system: respiratory, nervous, digestive

Action: diaphoretic, antipyretic, tonic nerves, spasmyotic, antibacterial, antiseptic and stimulating appetite.

Indications: colds, cough, inflammation of the sinuses, headaches, arthritis, rheumatism, fever (all kinds), distended abdomen, stress.

Caution: Basil is always recommended to use in limited quantities, since its pretty intense flavor.

Scientists claim that basil has repellent properties, it scares away flying bloodsucking insects. Researchers from Kenya say that the bushes of basil, planted around the house, able to repel mosquitoes. In Sri Lanka, Tulasi is known as Madura-tala and used as insect repellent.

In India, there is also a centuries-old practice of protection of grain from harmful insects by mixing it with dried leaves of Tulasi.
10. Shatavari

Asparagus racemosus

Shatavari means "she, who possesses hundred husbands", thus, its rejuvenating effect on the female reproductive system is rather strong. Shatavari is extremely rich in steroidal saponins, providing hormone-like action. Amplifies the production of breast milk, and normalizes the menstrual cycle, increases the ability to fertilize the ovule. Reinforces the transition of estradiol into estrol, thereby preventing the occurrence of fibrous mastopathy.

This is the best tonic for women, which is recommended in case of problems with the monthly cycle, premenstrual syndrome, amenorrhea, menopause, hysterectomy, endometritis, endometriosis and other pelvic inflammatory diseases, in the treatment of miscarriage and infertility.

Prevents the accumulation of dehidrotestosteron, which causes overgrowth of the prostate. In the complex treatment Shatavari can be used to treat genital herpes for people of Vata-type. As a tonic, Shatavari is used in treatment of chronic infectious diseases among the representatives of Vata and Pitta-type, as well as in the postoperative period.

It is believed that Shatavari, along with Ashwagandha and Guduchi, can replenish Ojas - Ayurvedic concept of vitality, without which life is impossible. As part of an energizing therapy Shatavari is used not only inside, but in the form of an enema. To prepare the enema, you should make milk broth from Shatavari.

Shatavari reduces Vata and Pitta, and therefore can be used in the therapy, which reduces these doshas. Shatavari is a sattvic plant and is used in the sattvic diet.

Shatavari is useful for the treatment of hemorrhoids for the representatives of Vata-type. Shatavari reduces the acidity of gastric juice, therefore, can be used in hyperacidity and peptic ulcer disease. Shatavari is also used in the treatment of chronic hepatitis.

Shatavari is used at the last stage of the treatment of allergies, when allergic reactions removed Shatavari is used for renewal as a tonic.
As a tonic, Shatavari is used for recovery at a reduced weight. Shatavari is used in treatment of laryngitis and asthma in the period between attacks.

Asparagine alkaloid has been found in Shatavari, it strengthens cardiac impulse and reduces heart rate and blood pressure. In addition, the plant is rich in bioflavonoids, which prevent damage to cell membranes. Hence, Shatavari should be used in treatment of heart disease among representatives of Pitta-type.

Shatavari tones (support) kidney, and therefore apply, along with other drugs, in the treatment of urinary tract infections among representatives of Vata-type. In the treatment of diabetes Shatavari is used as a tonic for people of Vata constitution.

Part in use: root
Taste: sweet, bitter
Taste after digestion (vipak): sweet
Energy: cooling
Effect on doshas: Pitta and Vata reduces, Kapha and Ama (in excess)
Tissue: effect on all tissues
Systems: circulatory, reproductive, respiratory, digestive
Action: nourishing, softening, urinative, rejuvenating
Indications: the weakness of the female organs, impotence, infertility, menopause, diarrhea, dysentery, gastric ulcer, hyperacidity, dehydration, lung abscess, vomiting of blood, cough, convalescence, cancer, herpes, leucorrhoea, relapsing fever.
Contraindications: high Ama, a lot of mucus.

11. Ashwagandha

11. Ashwagandha

Withania somnifera / Winter cherry
The name Ashwagandha in Sanskrit means "having the smell of the horse" as it's giving a "horse" life force and sexual energy. "Ashwa" - the horse and "Gandha" – the grass.

Ashwagandha in Ayurvedic medicine takes the same position as ginseng in China. This is the best anti-aging plant, especially for the muscles, marrow and semen, as well as for the people with a dominant Vata constitution.

Basis for its actions is related to the fact that it increases Ojas (Ojas, in contemporary language - is the energy of the immune system and sexual power). When the Ojas level falls, it is accompanied by degenerative and chronic diseases, incurable or difficult curable infections, and nervous disorders. This is one of the most powerful tonic herbs that restores body energy.

Ashwagandha should be used in Sattvic diet, i.e. food, promoting spiritual enlightenment. Ashwagandha is used in the complex treatment of candida, which, according to Ayurveda, is considered a manifestation of inner weakness and disturbed harmony. Therefore, for the treatment of candidiasis needs not only to destroy the fungus, but also to increase energy level.

The same principle of increasing energy and immunity is used in treatment of parasitic diseases with the help of Ashwagandha. It is used in treatment of strong protracted diarrhea and chronic dysentery.

Ashwagandha is useful in treating malabsorption syndrome of Vata-type. It is a state of weakness of the small intestine caused by an adverse environmental factors, including bacteria overgrowth. Malabsorption of Vata type is accompanied by flatulence, bloating, and migratory pain, dry skin, the appearance of cracks on the tongue and anus, weight loss and a tendency to arthritis. Periods when the stool is watery and frothy, alternates with periods when the stool is dry and hard. There is a loss of energy, which Ashwagandha easily makes up for.

Haemorrhoids of Vata type, when the haemorrhoid nodes are dry, hard, painful and is accompanied by constipation can be treated with the help of Ashwagandha.

Ashwagandha is used in the treatment of low body weight, as a remedy, which calms the nervous system. However, it must be borne in mind that if excessed weight or exceeding recommended dosages Ashwagandha can lead to accumulation of toxins and further increase the weight.

As a rule you should not use Ashwagandha in the treatment of colds, but in cases of dry cough, hoarseness and voice loss, insomnia, and weakness it is possible to use it as a tonic. Ashwagandha makes good use in the recovery period after colds.

In the treatment of asthma Ashwagandha should not be applied, because it can worsen the condition, but can be used in periods of prolonged exhausting treatment between attacks.

Similarly, Ashwagandha is used in the treatment of hay fever and allergic rhinitis: not used in the acute phase of disease, but is used in between bouts of illness as a tonic for the lungs. Thus, Ashwagandha has the properties which rebuilds and strengthens the immune system. It increases white blood cell count and prepares the body to produce antigens to fight off infections and allergies.
Ashwagandha is indicated for the treatment of heart disease of Vata-type when there are symptoms such as palpitations, a feeling of disruption in the heart, pressure in the chest, a sense of numbness. At the same time insomnia, shortness of breath, dry cough, constipation, often have dark circles under the eyes. Patient is annoyed with noise and loud speech. Attacks usually occur after fatigue at work or excessive exercises. Also there are symptoms like anxiety, fearfulness and sometimes fainting, after which the symptoms can worsen.

In cases of hypertension of Vata-type, which is accompanied by a non-regular, periodic manifestations and nervous disorders, Ashwagandha is used for a long time period as a toning therapy.

Ashwagandha can be used to treat infections of the urinary tract of Vata type, which is accompanied by prolonged chronic course without exacerbations. In this case, Ashwagandha acts as a kidney tonic.

Ashwagandha has a particular importance in the men impotence treatment, as an excellent tonic for the male and female reproductive system. In this connection, Ashwagandha uses in the treatment of prostatitis and genital herpes of Vata-type (genital herpes of Vata-type passes without redness, inflammation, and is accompanied by dry skin, constipation, insomnia and loss of strength).

Ashwagandha can be applied in the treatment of premenstrual syndrome of Vata-type, which is accompanied by anxiety, depression, insomnia, constipation, headache and a strong painful spasms. Also such symptoms as anxiety, agitation, confusion, possible dizziness, ringing in the ears, fainting, fast-changing mood, feeling of cold, thirst and dry skin may occur.

A woman may experience the thoughts about suicide, but with the beginning of menstruation it all goes away.

The duration of menstruation may be not long with increased pain at dawn and at dusk (the time of Vata).

Ashwagandha is also used for the treatment of amenorrhea (delay or absence of menstruation), menorrhagia (heavy menstrual bleeding), as well as Ashwagandha prevents premature menopause, and that pesky diseases like Parkinson's disease.

Among other specific woman conditions, when Ashwagandha is rather useful are the pregnancy period and abortion or in the complex treatment of female infertility.

Ashwagandha is useful in treating the arthritis, when it is necessary to stop the degenerative and atrophic processes in the bones, but you should note that tonic, which has a bit heavy nature, can increase the formation of toxins from undigested food.

Ashwagandha should be used for children and the elderly. Ashwagandha promotes the development of growth hormone, which is nessesary for the children and for the elderly, it is the primary tool for building strong bones and joints, it also helps with impotence and incontinence.

It is observed a good positive effect of Ashwagandha in the alopecia treatment of Vata type, which is accompanied by dry skin, anxiety, insomnia, constipation, indigestion and instability. It often arises after a major fright or severe illness.

Ashwagandha has shown good efficiency in the treatment of cancer, as proven by clinical tests. In this case, the high dose should be taken- 30 grams per day and above.
And, of course, Ashwagandha is one of the most important ayurvedic remedies for the treatment of the nervous system disorders. The plant has vata-suppressant properties that help relieve stress and at the same time help nurture the nervous system.

In particular, Ashwagandha is used in treating the multiple sclerosis and Parkinson’s disease. Ashwagandha - the main tool for the treatment of anxiety accompanying many neurological disorders. This is a good remedy for treating insomnia, migraine headaches, as well as in epilepsy (in combination with flagroot (Air)).

Particular attention should be paid to the treatment of mental disorders with the help of Ashwagandha. In this case, Ashwagandha is used together with Ghee (cow butter). Ashwagandha is useful when insanity of Vata type occurs, which is accompanied by an idiopathic laugh, cry or singing, memory loss, incoherent speech, chaotic gestures or incoordination of movement. This patient looks worn out and exhausted, overwhelmed with anxiety, depression, insomnia and nightmares.

Ashwagandha can be applied when there are problems associated with yogic practices such as Pranayama or Kundalini awakening. The kundalini may get out of control during heavy meditation techniques or as a result of drug use.

Ashwagandha is useful for treating tobacco addiction among representatives of Vata-type and drugs addiction in all types.

Part in use: Root.

Energy: The taste - bitter, astringent, action – warming, the taste after digestion - sweet.

Doshas: Vata and Kapha decreases, Pitta and Ama (in excess)

Effect on the tissue: muscle, fat, bone, bone marrow, nervous and reproductive.

Effect on systems: reproductive, it is aphrodisiac, which influences the quality of sperm; nervous, respiratory.

Common Action: tonic, adaptogenic and stress-protective, improving the metabolism of the brain, immunity, anti-inflammatory, aphrodisiac (increases sexual energy) tonic, rejuvenating, strengthens nerves, sedative, astringent.

Indications: general tiredness, sexual weakness, nervous exhaustion, convalescence, problems associated with old age, exhaustion in children, memory loss, muscle weakness, spermatorrhoea, overwork, tissue deficiency, insomnia, paralysis, multiple sclerosis, weak eyes, rheumatism, skin diseases, cough, shortness of breath, anemia, fatigue, infertility, swelling of the glands.

Cautions:
Many say to not take ashwagandha if the patient is suffering from congestion, is pregnant, or is breastfeeding since no formal studies have been performed to witness any possible side effects that might come out in such cases. Patients with hyperthyroidism should also not take the herb as studies suggest that it may raise thyroid hormone levels.
All in all, ashwagandha or winter cherry is an herb that improves physical energy and abilities, increases immunity to fight against colds and infections and can be used to increase sexual capacity and fertility. The plant is generally safe and should be consumed with the recommended dosages.

12. Turmeric

Curcuma/ Haridra

In XVI-XVII centuries in Western Europe, turmeric was called "terra merita", which means "worthy of the land." Only in the middle of the XVIII century, it acquired its present name - Curcuma. And in Central Asia it is still called - zarchava. Curcuma belongs to the ginger family. It is mainly found in South Asia. Turmeric comes under the category of herbs, and is a spice commonly used in South Asian cuisine. There are also many health benefits of turmeric, because of which it plays a significant role in Ayurveda. Turmeric has helped in curing more than 4000 diseases and illnesses. It is a very effective medicine with little side effects.

Curcumin, an ingredient of turmeric, is responsible for this action and has proved to be more powerful than vitamin E. Medical experiments carried out by Chinese scientists in 1987 have proved that turmeric is also beneficial in reducing and bringing down the intensity of cholesterol in the body. Although turmeric is considered to be useful in preventing cancer among people, there is a need for more research to establish the fact. Researches conducted by various scientists have established that turmeric is very useful in thinning blood. The herb is also known to enhance secretion and flow of bile and act as a safeguard for the stomach and the liver.

Turmeric is one of the most popular Ayurvedic spices. It is believed that turmeric bestows prosperity, as gives the energy of the Divine Mother.

This spice is able to clear the energy channels of the body, so it is effective for cleansing the chakras. She also contributes to the elasticity of ligaments, so it is good to use for those, who practice hatha yoga.

Due to the ability of turmeric to clear energy channels, it is used to treat conditions of blocking energy. Blocked energy is a manifested state of depression, tension, which from time to time can lead to the bursts. This condition mostly happens with young people. The Block of energy, can eventually lead to failure of energy, which is hard to treat.
So, to prevent the reduction of energy, turmeric, along with air should be actively used as a spice. You can also drink it at night with hot milk, butter, cocoa and honey.

Turmeric along with ginger, cinnamon, cardamom, fennel and coriander refers to the number of sattvic spices, which conduct you to the goodness.

Turmeric has antibiotic properties, but, unlike pharmaceutical antibiotics, it improves the digestive system (good for Pitta dosha), help to get rid of stomach problems and restore normal intestinal flora. So, turmeric can be taken as a dietary supplement.

Turmeric promotes the preservation of normal digestive fire - Agni. It is well known that good health is connected with good digestion. Like other soft sattvic spices - cardamom, coriander and fennel - turmeric is able to support digestion in the balance.

Despite the fact that for people of Pitta-type food with abundance of spices is contraindicated, turmeric can be used with great benefit, especially when consuming a heavy meal. Turmeric also reduces the craving for sweet and fatty. Turmeric is also useful for the representatives of Vata and Kapha types. For Kapha-type people turmeric acts most strongly, by reducing it.

Turmeric helps to cleanse the body of Ama (toxins), and its effect is milder than in the composition "Trikaty", to prepare the cleaning mixture you need to take equal parts of gentian, barberry and turmeric, take this mixture in capsules or with honey - 0,5-1 gram two - three times a day.

Turmeric along with aloe juice can be a good substitute for the classical ayurvedic remedy "Tryfala". Mixture can be made independently by mixing 2-3 teaspoons of aloe juice with little turmeric. Mixture should be taken 2-3 times a day. The best effect will be, if you combine this treatment together with diet, lowering the corresponding dosha. Need to be aware that aloe juice has to be natural, without any additives or preservatives. Better if you take it from aloe plant.

This remedy is also very effective in weight reduction, as it improves the metabolic rate of the body, thus helps with such widespread problem as obesity.

Turmeric perfectly cleanses the blood, warms it and promotes the formation of new blood cells. It prevents blood clotting to a large extent, thereby improving blood circulation. This helps in the prevention of heart attacks and heart problems. You can make a heart tonic- a decoction of myrrh with turmeric.

Turmeric has positive action in the treatment of arteriosclerosis. In its pure form for this purpose, turmeric can be used for people of Vata and Kapha constitution. People of Pitta-type should apply aloe juice with turmeric.

Turmeric helps in improving liver health. In order to improve the liver turmeric can be used as a tea (before or after the meal) or as seasonings to food. A mixture of equal parts of turmeric and barberry cleans and strengthens the liver, prevents stagnation. If you add Gotu Cola to this mixture, in addition to the liver, you will beneficially affect the mind.

It will also reduce the craving for sugar, fat and alcohol - that is, everything that affects the liver.

Turmeric is especially useful in the treatment of hepatitis. Under hepatitis in Ayurveda we mean all kinds of hepatitis - infectious (viral) and noninfectious (toxic). Principles of treatment in any case are similar.
In acute hepatitis we must stick to strict Pitta diet. Keep bed rest and exclude from the diet all hot, sour, salty, spicy foods, fried foods, sweet foods, meat, fish, cheese, butter and refined sugar. In severe cases, even milk and butter Ghee should not be used. It’s better to eat raw green vegetables and germinated seeds. Best food for the liver are beans. In severe cases, mono-diet of “mung beans” (Vigna radiata) during 1-2 weeks can be lead. After this diet you can eat some “basmati rice” and cook “kichadi” with turmeric and coriander. Best herbal action you can get from fresh aloe juice with the addition of turmeric and coriander. In order to avoid chronic disease, treatment should continue for at least three months.

Turmeric is very effective in the treatment of the inflammatory bowel disease. It reduces the chances of childhood leukemia. It may prevent and slow the progression of Alzheimer’s disease by removing amyloid plaque buildup in the brain, metastases from occurring in many different forms of cancer.

Turmeric is a good treatment against hemorrhoids. It can be applied outwardly to the affected areas. In this case turmeric can be prepared with water as a paste or as an ointment. As an ointment base you can take Ghee (the refined cow butter). In other case turmeric can be taken orally, as one of the reasons of hemorrhoids – is a poor digestion.

The antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties of turmeric also help in the improvement of rheumatoid arthritis. Regular use of turmeric improves conditions like joint swelling and joint diseases.

Cough is caused by an accumulation of mucus, or irritation of upper respiratory tract. Turmeric can deal with this problem. In contrast to the approaches of modern medicine, Ayurveda aims to not fight with a cough, but to excrete the mucus. Turmeric in this case is used separately in the form of powder. In the form of rinses turmeric can be used in the treatment of pharyngitis and laryngitis.

Allergic asthma is treated with turmeric powder, heated in the butter with the addition of brown sugar. Taken during the attacks.

Turmeric is used as the treatment of hypotension and bleeding. When pulmonary hemorrhage milk with turmeric can be used. Turmeric is effective in treating anemia. You can add turmeric to the Ghee, or prepare Ghee with the addition of turmeric.

In the treatment of diabetes, among other means, turmeric is used for 1-3 grams 2-3 times a day with aloe juice. This composition is particularly effective in the early stages of diabetes.

Turmeric is also very effective in the treatment of skin problems such as psoriasis, boils and acne (blackheads) and other inflammatory skin conditions. Turmeric is a natural antiseptic and antibacterial agent, useful in disinfecting cuts and burns in case of cuts, bruises or wounds. It helps in reducing germs and bacteria, and in healing wounds faster. When injuries just hold fresh turmeric root to the wound, it will cause blood to stop and will naturally heal it without scarring. Turmeric is an effective anti-inflammatory medicine with no side effects. Turmeric can also be used as a pain killer.

Turmeric also helps prevent melanoma, which is a skin cancer. It also destroys the existing melanoma cells. Turmeric helps in preventing breast cancer.
Turmeric is a natural treatment for arthritis and rheumatoid arthritis. In sports medicine, ointment from turmeric is a good treatment from sprains. Prepare an ointment by adding turmeric powder in a ratio of 1:4 to the melted butter Guy. The same ointment can be used to treat arthritis.

Turmeric is useful for children and in old age. A good tonic for bones for the elderly consists of four parts of comfrey root, two parts of turmeric, two pieces of licorice and one part of cinnamon.

Turmeric also possesses menstruation action, which makes it applicable to regulate menstruation. Also used in the treatment of premenstrual syndrome (PMS) for people of Vata-type.

Turmeric is used in the treatment of genital herpes, especially for people of Vata and Kapha constitution.

Turmeric, when consumed with cauliflower, is very useful in preventing prostrate cancer.

Aloe juice with turmeric is effective to treat the gout.

As a powerful remedy, that removes toxins and promotes healing of tissues, turmeric, along with other drugs can be used to treat cancer. Dosage in this case must be quite large.

Turmeric contains fluoride which is very beneficial for maintaining your teeth. To strengthen the hair you can rub curcuma and sandalwood oil into your head.

The antioxidants present in turmeric help in preventing cataracts. Turmeric is rich in antioxidants, and is, therefore, used as a medicine for preventing premature aging.

Part in use: the root

Taste: bitter, astringent, pungent

Taste after digestion (vipak): acute

Energy: Warming

Effect on the doshas: Kapha reduces, Pitta and Vata (in excess)

Tissue: effect on all tissue elements of the body

Systems: digestive, circulatory, respiratory

Action: stimulating, carminative, improving metabolism, healing, antibacterial etc.

Indications: indigestion, poor circulation, cough, amenorrhea, pharyngitis, skin diseases, diabetes, arthritis, anemia, wounds, bruises etc.

Cautions: acute jaundice and acute hepatitis, pregnancy, high Pitta.

13. Hawthorn
Crataégus/ May Tree/ May Blossom/ White Thorn

In Ayurveda, as well as in Western medicine the hawthorn is a recognized treatment for diseases of the cardiovascular system. Hawthorn improves blood circulation, strengthens the heart muscle, lowers cholesterol and promotes longevity. People can benefit from the medicinal effects of this herb, including anyone who suffers from high blood pressure, coronary artery disease, angina or heart arrhythmia (irregular heart beats).

Hawthorn is considered a potent tonic for the heart. This herb directly benefits the functioning of the heart. It can dilate blood vessels, increase the heart’s energy supply and improve its pumping ability. These powerful cardiac effects can probably be traced to its abundant supply of plant compounds called flavonoids – especially procyanidolic oligomers (PCOs) – which act as potent antioxidants.

Hawthorn also seems to block enzymes that weaken the heart muscle, thereby strengthening its pumping power. This property is especially useful for people with mild congestive heart failure, who don’t require strong heart medications. It can also correct irregular heartbeat (cardiac arrhythmia). Moreover, the anti-oxidant properties of hawthorn may help to protect against damage associated with the build up of plaque in the coronary arteries. Clinical trials have also found benefits in the elderly with no heart conditions but simply deteriorating heart function with age.

Hawthorn is also useful in the recovery period after a heart attack by strengthening the heart muscle, and improving blood flow and oxygen to the heart. Hawthorn has also a calming effect, and is an effective sleeping aid for some people who suffer from insomnia.

Hawthorn can also preserve collagen – the protein that forms connective tissue -which is damaged in such diseases as arthritis. Collagen is the body’s most abundant protein and is responsible for maintaining the integrity of many parts of the body, including ligaments, tendons, cartilage, and arteries.

Hawthorn is reported to be beneficial for heart complaints during menopause, anxiety and nervous disorders.

Improves oxygenation which has an immediate beneficial impact on energy levels. Improves blood flow through the heart arteries. Hawthorn increases strength of heart contractions. Prevents plaque buildup in the arteries. Hawthorn relaxes blood vessels so
that blood flows more efficiently. Helps prevent high blood pressure build up in the arteries. Hawthorn has a good effect in the treating of arteriosclerosis.

This herb, historically used both as a diuretic and as a treatment for kidney and bladder stones, is presently one of the most widely prescribed heart remedies in Europe. Hawthorn berries have an affinity for alcohol, so it can be prepared as an alcohol tincture. Also you can obtain a good wine from the hawthorn.

Hawthorn is especially effective in cardiac disorders of Vata type, as well as any heart diseases which may occur in the elderly (Vata age).

However, it must be remembered that hawthorn aggravates Pitta and Kapha. The vast majority of people have heart diseases of neurogenic nature, it is mostly of Vata type, then hawthorn will definitely help. For some patients with diseases of the cardiovascular system caused by an imbalance of Pitta, hawthorn will not help, but could possible harm.

Such cases we see in everyday life. For example, two patients are taking hawthorn tincture when feel palpitations. One of them has palpitations on the background of some disturbances or fears (Vata-type palpitations), in this case hawthorn perfectly helps. The other one is angry on the whole world (palpitations of Pitta-type) – now hawthorn doesn't help, moreover, it can even significantly increase heart problems.

To strengthen the heart muscle hawthorn berries can be used together with other cardiac tonics, in particular with cardamom or cinnamon.

At home, you can prepare such a composition: 15 g of hawthorn berries with 1 teaspoon of cinnamon to boil 0.5 liters of water 20 minutes on low heat. Taken as a heart tonic three times a day with honey after meals.

Small doses of hawthorn help to remove accumulations of indigested food masses, and even eliminate tumors out of the gastrointestinal tract.

Part in use: fruit

Energy: acidic (warming), acid

Effect on the doshas: Vata decreases, Pitta and Kapha (in excess)

Tissue: plasma, blood, muscle

Systems: circulatory, digestive

Action: stimulating, carminative, vasodilating, spasmolytic, diuretic

Indications: heart failure, arteriosclerosis, heart valve insufficiency, hypertension, palpitation, vascular clots, insomnia, food stagnation, abdominal tumors.

Cautions: Hawthorn in large doses exacerbates not only Pitta but Kapha. Therefore, large doses of hawthorn may cause an increase in body weight. Also ulcers and colitis.

14. Guggul
Commiphora Mucul / Gum Guggulu/ Indian Bedellium

Guggulu means the one, who protects from all diseases, is a highly valued botanical medicine used in Ayurveda. There are ample references to Guggul and its medicinal properties in 'Sushruta Samahita', the classical ancient treatise on Ayurvedic medicine, which describes the use of Guggul for a wide variety of conditions. "Guggul is the best among herbs that are used for obesity and Vata disorders." (Charaka Samhita, Sutra Section, Ch. 25)

The mukul myrrh tree is a medium-sized, thorny tree found throughout India. Guggul and gum guggulu are the names of the yellowish resin exuding from its trunk. This resin is the source of the modern extracts of guggul. It is used in ayurvedic medicine to increase circulation, stimulating healthy circulation to the skin and through the veins.

Guggulu is a well known plant for its cholesterol lowering action. In Ayurveda it is mainly used to scrap out the toxic substances, which aggravate Vata causing arthritis like conditions. Guggul extracts lower blood-cholesterol levels by stimulating the incorporation of cholesterol into the linings of cells, where it is beneficial, and by increasing the excretion of excess cholesterol into the bile to be removed with intestinal wastes. It also stimulates the liver to “grab” low-density lipoprotein (LDL, or “bad”) cholesterol from the bloodstream for processing into high-density lipoprotein (HDL, or “good”) cholesterol. Clinical tests have found that about 75 percent of people who used guggulsterones for three months saw their total blood-cholesterol and triglyceride levels go down by 20 to 25 percent. About half the people who used the herb for three months saw higher HDL levels. Clinical studies have also found that guggulsterones are especially helpful for people who have high cholesterol levels because of kidney disease.

In the treatment of arteriosclerosis it is useful in reducing existing plaque in arteries, thus narrowing of the arteries.

In terms of obesity, Guggul increases body’s metabolic rate; Guggul improves thyroid function, increases fat-burning activity of the body, and increases thermogenesis or heat production. Guggul herb is a very good blood purifier and is thus used to treat various skin diseases including leprosy and eczema.

In Ayurvedic medicine, it is used to remove "Ama", or deposits of waste or toxic material in the body, including mucus and mineral deposits in the joints, thus reducing a possible cause of sluggishness, inflamed joints, and many other conditions. A direct anti inflammatory effect has been observed for guggulsterones. Guggul has also been shown to reduce the stickiness of platelets-another effect that lowers the risk of coronary artery disease. Guggul is a very useful anti inflammatory and pain relieving herb. It treats pain by suppressing Vata which is the main pain causing factor. Thus,
guggul is used for treating rheumatoid arthritis, gout, osteoarthritis, sciatica, paralysis, hemiplegia, lymphadenopathy and other such chronic pain conditions. Guggul herb is also beneficial for women's health as it gives relief from menstrual problems like painful menses, cramps and other related conditions.

Interesting notes:

- Guggul resin is produced more abundantly and is stronger in potency during the season of autumn; hence, Ayurveda states that guggul resin must be collected in autumn.

- Different selections of guggul resin have different therapeutic actions based on the age of the guggulu. Freshly collected guggulu has a Brumhana (weight increasing) quality, where as Purana guggul (guggul which is at least one year old) has an Atilekhana (weight reducing) quality.

- Classical Ayurvedic texts never recommend administering guggulu alone; it has to be given along with other herbs in compounds such as Triphala Guggul, Kaishore Guggul, Trayodashanga Guggul, Yogaraja Guggul, Kanchanara Guggul, etc. The administration of guggulu with other herbs has the effect of purging Ama (toxic, morbid substance) from the body.

Part in use: Exudate

Bio-energetics:

Rasa(Taste)- Tikta (Bitter); Katu (Pungent)
Veerya (Potency)- Ushna (Warm)
Vipaka (Post digestion effect)- Katu (Pungent)
Prabhava (Special action for which there is no explanation how it works)- Tridoshhara (Pacifies all the three bio humors)
Dosha effect: VK-, P+

Actions according to Ayurveda:

Vrishya- Increases sexual appetite
Atilekhana(for one year old Guggulu)- Guggulu is very efficient in scraping out the unnecessary fat and toxins out of the body
Bhagnasandhana krit- Guggulu is a good healer of fracture
Swarya- Guggulu promotes the voice
Rasayana- Guggulu rejuvenates the body
Deepana- Guggulu is a good appetite stimulant
Balya- Guggulu increases strength
Medo-anihara- Removes unwanted fat and air component from the body
Action: it is alterative, antiatherogenic, antihypercholesterolemic, anti-inflammatory (powerful), antipyretic, antiseptic, antispasmodic, antisuppurative, aperient, aphrodisiac, astringent, bitter, carminative, demulcent, diaphoretic, disinfectant, diuretic, emmenagogue, enhances phagocytosis, immunostimulant (increases leukocytes), stimulating expectorant, stomachic, thyroid stimulant, uterine stimulant.

Indications: loss of appetite, flatulence, liver disorders, hemorrhoids, worm infestations

Painful urination, pus discharge in urine, kidney stones; Dysmenorrhoea, infertility,

In all types of inflammatory conditions of skin, itching, pigment disorders; Neuralgia, sciatica, facial paralysis, hemiplegia, osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis

Doses: 2-4 gm

How to identify original Guggulu: The original Guggulu is easily soluble in water making it milky white, burns on fire, melts when heated and is free from soil particles.

Purification of Guggulu: To purify guggul in this manner, it should be wrapped in a sack of cotton cloth and dipped in simmering cow's milk, which must be continuously stirred until all the pure substance of the guggul is absorbed into the milk. When this process is complete, the milk containing the pure guggul gum resin will be solidified and the cotton sack containing the impurities or toxins of the guggulu is to be discarded.

Known Hazards: Although the use of guggul in therapeutic doses appears to be safe and non-toxic, the following precautions are advised. Guggul is considered an emmenagogue (an agent that promotes the menstrual discharge) and a uterine stimulant, and should not be used during pregnancy. Possible diarrhea, hiccups, restlessness, apprehension.

In addition, caution is recommended with patients currently on prescribed medications for cardiovascular disease. Due to the diuretic action of this herb the following drug interactions are possible: increased risk of toxicity with anti-inflammatory analgesics; if hypokalemia occurs possible antagonism with antiarrhythmics and potentiation of muscle relaxants; antagonizes antidiabetic (hypoglycemic) drugs; may potentiate and/or interfere with antihypertensives; may potentiate lithium therapy; when taken with corticosteroids there is a risk for hypokalemia; may potentiate other diuretics and increase the risk of hypokalemia.

15. Guduchi
Guduchi is a herbaceous vine native to tropical areas of India, Burma and Sri Lanka.

This Ayurvedic herb is known by various other names like Giloya, which means in Hindi heavenly elixir. In Sanskrit it is known as Amrita, which means the immortal nectar. Guduchi - the one, who protects the body, is used in Ayurvedic and Jamu herbal medicine as a hepatoprotectant. This herb acts as a liver protectant and protects the damage to liver by alcohol poisoning, viral hepatitis, medicinal drugs or chemicals. Guduchi also regenerates liver tissues and repairs fibrosis.

Recent research has demonstrated that a combination of Guduchi extract and turmeric extract is effective in preventing the hepatotoxicity, which is otherwise produced as a side effect of conventional pharmaceutical treatments for tuberculosis, using drugs such as isoniazid and rifampicin.

Modern research shows it to be a strong immunostimulant with very food anti-cytotoxic (drugs used in treating cancer) effects. The use of Guduchi helps to reduce effects of these toxic cancer-fighting drugs, and with its immune-promoting qualities, could even prevent cancer. Other studies show the ability to regulate the sugar level in blood, thus, it is a cure for diabetes. The extracts of the leaves of Tinospora have an insulin-like action.

Besides anti-allergy effects, Tinospora has also shown some promise for decreasing the tissue damage caused by radiation and the side effects of some forms of chemotherapy, and speeding healing of diabetic foot ulcers. However, all these findings are far too preliminary to be relied upon.

Guduchi is described as one of the Medhya Rasayana - mental rejuvenative in the Charak Samhita. It delays the signs of aging, increases longevity and rejuvenates the body, enhances grasping power, recollection ability. It is an excellent memory enhancer, promotes mental clarity and develops intelligence. Guduchi is considered one of the best herbs to clear the micro-circulatory system and other bodily channels. The antistress or anxiolytic activity of Tinospora cordifolia is well documented by researchers and clinically tested.
Human studies conducted on Guduchi's immune-boosting ability show it to be linked to enhancing the function of protective cells called macrophages. The plant is used to improve the immune system and the body's resistance to infections. The stem is used in dyspepsia and fevers. It is also effective against several urinary disorders such as renal calculi. Guduchi purifies the breast milk; alleviates anorexia making a person to feel hungry as it ignites digestive fire.

Guduchi is also used for cure of joints pain like arthritis and gout; is used for cure of eye disorders as it is a tissue builder. It is used for treatment of constipation, hemorrhoids, intestinal bleeding and dysentery.

Tinospora crispa Miers, which is abundant in the Philippines, is used freely by the natives under the name of makabuhay that is, "You may live", as a panacea, especially valuable in general debility, in chronic rheumatism, and in malarial fevers. It may be prepared in the same way and given in the same doses as Tinospora cordifolia.

Part in use: stem

Bio energetics:
Rasa (Taste)- Tikta (Bitter); Kashaya (Astringent)
Veerya (Potency)- Ushna (Warm)
Vipaka (Post digestion effect)- Madhura (Sweet)

Those growing up Neem (Azadirachta indica) trees are said to be the best as the synergy between these two bitter plants enhances Guduchi’s efficacy.

Effect on Tridosha (Three bio humors):
Pacifies all the three Doshas and maintain their balance with each other i.e. why it is said to be having Rasayana character; besides it find important place in the herbs useful in management of diseases having Tridoshic origin; when taken with Ghee (Indian clarified butter) it balances Vata, with Guda (Jaggery) Pitta and with honey the Kapha.

Action: anti-inflammatory, anti-rheumatic, anti-allergic and antipyretic properties, diuretic, memory booster, liver protector, eye disorders, stomach disorders, diabetes etc.
Indications: Extensive pharmacological studies have shown its usefulness in many disorders including antistress, anticancer, immunomodulation, antispasmodic, asthma, hypolipidaemic, antipyretic, antineoplastic, hepatoprotective, anitulcer, antimicrobial and more.

16. Amalaki
Emblica officinalis

Amalaki - an Indian Gooseberry is considered a holy tree in India. It is found everywhere in the woods in most regions of India and even at altitudes up to 1300 meters in the Himalayas. Tree was worshiped as the Mother Earth, and is believed that it can bring up humanity, because its fruits are very nutritious. This is one of the most commonly used herbs in Ayurvedic medicine. An interesting aspect is that not only fruits are health-giving but also leaves, flowers, seeds, bark and roots of this tree possess medicinal properties.

The fruit of Phyllanthus emblica, also called Emblica officinalis - pale yellow, sometimes greenish-yellow, juicy and transparent, spherical, less than an inch in diameter, is ripen in the period from November to February. Amly fruits are an important food source for many tribes in India. Amalaki has sattvic nature and bestows good luck, love and longevity. The tree itself is a long-liver.

Amla is the most potent natural source of Vitamin C. In fact, this tiny fruit has 30 times more vitamin C than an orange and 1,5 times more than in the wild rose hips - up to 3000 mg in one fruit. Vitamin C, when taken in the form of supplements, is not always easily absorbed. But when you eat an amla berry, the Vitamin C present is easily assimilated by body.

Active ingredient of amalaki, which has an important pharmacological property - "phylemblin". Amalaki also contains various forms of ascorbic acid, combined with tannic acid complex and the gallium acid. Because of this the amalaki fruit can store vitamin C for a long time. Bioflavonoids and carotenoids were found in this plant, which together with ascorbates have antioxidant properties. Along with catechins, antioxidants prevent the development of atherosclerosis and various immune disorders of the body. The fruits of this plant contain substances that stimulate the production of erythropoietin, so the plant has long been used to treat anemia. Glycosides and saponins of the plant normalize bowel function by eliminating constipation, bloating phenomenon and intestinal colic. The tests have shown that amalaki contains natural antiseptic that suppress the vital activity of pathogenic flora of the gut and genital tract. It is also very powerful anti-inflammatory herb.
Fresh amla fruits are of sour taste, they have diuretic, laxative and carminative effect, and also promote digestion. The powder of the dried amla fruit is an effective remedy of hyperacidity, ulcers and blood impurities. It is also used both internally and externally as a decoction and paste. Its decoction is used in hyperacidity and with honey as an anthelmintic. The powder of the dried amla fruit is an effective remedy of hyperacidity, ulcers and blood impurities. It is also used both internally and externally as a decoction and paste. Its decoction is used in hyperacidity and with honey as an anthelmintic.

Amalaki juice, mixed with sugar, can help women to reduce the burning sensation of the birth canal inflammation. The fruit of amalaki is a strong tonic, it promotes blood formation and the formation of reproductive fluids, nourishes the heart, lungs and kidneys. Paste of the fruit of amalaki is applied to the head to treat mental health problems.

From the amla fruit you can even cook a tasty jam or make sweets. It is rather simple. Soak the fruit in water for 2 hours. Then, when they are softened, mix them with sugar (in the ratio of one to three) and grind into a paste. This sweet remedy will be useful in a variety of ailments: heart palpitations, constipation, anorexia or acrimony.

Crushed green fresh leaves of amla simply mixed with yogurt, help with indigestion and diarrhea. Leaf juice brings relief when treating ulcer.

The amla bark also acts as an astringent. Juice of amla bark, mixed with honey and turmeric, helps in the treatment of contagious infection of the mucous membrane of genital tract.

The bark of the root, mixed with honey, treat white sores on mucous membranes of the mouth and helps to remove them. Fermented liquor from the root help with jaundice and dyspepsia.

Flowers also have a cooling effect and the effect of a laxative.

Amla seeds also have a number of applications. Crushed into powder, mixed with red sandalwood (Pterocarpus santalinus) and honey, they apply in cases of nausea and vomiting. Seeds of amla can be burned, ground into powder and mixed with oil to apply in treating scabies. Tincture of the seeds is used for washing the eyes with conjunctivitis and other eye diseases. Soaked for one night in a clay pot, dried amla fruits give tincture, to rinse the eyes with ophthalmia, as it is an essential vitamin to improve eye sight.

Amla health benefits:

Vitamin C is an excellent anti-oxidant and, as amla is so rich in Vitamin C, it has strong anti-oxidant properties and helps combat free radicals. Free radicals are unstable ions in the body, responsible for ageing and cell degeneration. Amla stabilises these free radicals and is believed to be the most powerful rejuvenating agent known to man. Thus, Amla strengthens the body, expel toxins from the body and improves defense mechanism of the body.

Amla is a fruit that enhances food absorption and thus helps you get the most out of the food you eat. It helps the body digest food better and assimilate minerals like iron. Another excellent digestive is ginger, but ginger tends to heat the body. Amla does not heat the body, and is gentler on the entire system. Regular intake of amla almost always results in a stronger, healthier digestive system and in improved overall immunity. Weakness of body, heart and mind shall be dispelled by taking fresh amla juice in between meals.

Amla also helps boost protein metabolism, so if you exercise and work out regularly you will benefit greatly from regular amla intake. Similarly, people who have a
tendency to gain weight easily tend to have poor metabolism. The better your metabolism, the better the body’s ability to burn fat and keep you slim. As amla enhances metabolism, it helps you lose weight faster.

Regular use of pain killers, antibiotics and medication, regular intake of alcohol, all cause toxin build-up in the liver. Amla helps strengthen and maintain the functioning of the liver and rid the body of these toxins. It thus helps purify and clean the blood. This is why amla is good for the skin, and if taken in combination with neem, it can help clear out pimples that are caused due to impure blood. In addition to the skin, amla is also great for the hair. It nourishes hair roots and is believed to prevent premature graying and dandruff. Massaging the head with amla oil, induces sound sleep.

In addition, studies have shown that Amla helps lower cholesterol, it strengthen the lungs, the respiratory system, and the body’s central nervous system. Amla is powerful food for the brain.

Just like most berries, amla is low in sugar and has a high fibre content, making it an ideal daily fruit for almost anyone, moreover it regulates blood sugar.

Amalaki rebuilds and maintains new tissues, increases hemoglobin synthesis and red blood cell count, also prevents lipid peroxidation in cell membranes and protects against heart disease and nervous disorders.

Amla cleanses the mouth, strengthens the teeth, stops bleeding of the gums, nourishes the bones. Insert 2-4 amla juice drops into each nostril to cure bleeding from nose.

Amla enhances vision, especially in the inflammatory stage, as well amla removes the myopia (shortsightedness), it is often used in the treatment of cataracts, amla is potent inhibitor of free radicals, which are one of the causes of cataracts. Wash eyes daily, in the morning with amla water.

Amalaki is used to treat hemorrhoids, which goes together with loss of appetite and pain in the pelvis, back, lower abdomen and bladder.

Amalaki is used in high acidity, because it has emollient properties, as well as in chronic hepatitis and anemia. In chronic fevers it is recommended to use amalaki together with shatavari and aloe. Also useful for cough, bronchitis and asthma.

In small doses (0.5-1g. twice a day) amalaki is a general health-improving tonic for children from one year old. In these cases it is used with milk or tea.

There are a number of standard preparations containing amla, like dhatri Arista useful in jaundice, dyspepsia, indigestion and coughs. A dhatri Leha useful in anemia, jaundice and dyspepsia. Amla or aoula is a key component of popular Ayurvedic herbal jem, that gives energy and strengthens the whole body, -Chyawanprash.

Parts in use: the whole plant

Common action: nutritious tonic, rejuvenating, laxative, refrigerant, stomachic, astringent, styptic, anti-inflammatory, detoxifying etc.
Indications: disorder accompanied by bleeding, hemorrhoids, anemia, diabetes, gout, dizziness, gastritis, colitis, hepatitis, osteoporosis, constipation, bile overflowing, the weakness of the liver or spleen, arrhythmia, premature graying or hair loss, recovery from fever, general tiredness and tissue failure, mental disorders etc.

Effect on doshas: enhances Odjas (vital energy), calms Vata and Pitta.

Causions: acute diarrhea, dysentery.

Doze: 1-4g. twice daily with warm water before eating.

17. Brahmi

Centella asiatica/ Brahmi/ Water Pennywort

Gotu Kola also known as Centella and Indian pennywort. Other Names are Daun Kaki Kuda, Gagan-gagan, Gourka, Mangosteen. In Sanskrit texts, this plant was called Brahmi and Mandukaparni.
The leaves were used for pediatric complaints in bowel problems, fever and applied externally for blows and bruises.
In Java, Brahmi was considered diuretic and on the Malabar Coast, the plant is one of the remedies for leprosy.
In Sri Lanka, the crushed leaves of gotu kola are commonly eaten, either in the form of a hot beverage or as a green salad.

Gotu Kola is also a very popular herb in India for longevity and mental function. It is used to decrease fatigue and depression, and to stimulate the sex drive. It energizes the central nervous system, and aids the circulatory system, soothes and minimizes varicose veins and helps to minimize scarring. It is also useful in repairing connective tissues and smoothing out cellulite.

It was found in swampy areas of India, commonly found as a weed in crop fields and other waste places throughout India up to an altitude of 600 m. Herbalists have used the gotu kola in treating people affected by all sorts of mental troubles, all sorts of nervous disorders - hysteria, delirium, neurasthenia (nervous exhaustion) as well as jaundice. Gotu Kola does not contain caffeine, providing a soothing effect on the central nervous system.

Particular attention should be paid to the gotu kola in the treatment of diabolism cases. This is the best remedy of the few possible in this situation. Gotu kola should be
used with Ghee butter. Brahmi is also used for the treatment of mentally retarded people. Brahmi contains a mixture of oils used on the head area, which contributes to peace and better sleep. This is a useful remedy for epileptic seizures, and in these cases it is given together with sweet figs.

The power of rejuvenation is attributed to the gotu kola, this particular reputation as a “rejuvenator”, herb has been linked to the gotu kola for a long time. Brahmi is revered for strengthening the immune system, improving vitality and performance and promoting longevity. It is widely used by students and older people alike.

Brahmi is considered the most sattvic, the most spiritual plant. It is always recommended to stimulate and improve the clarity of mind to all people, especially those engaged in spiritual practices. It promotes the increase of Odjas (vital energy).

The modern tests have shown that Gotu kola nourishes the brain cells, as a result Brahmi improves mental clarity, concentration and abilities, confidence, intelligence and memory recall, streighten the intellectual power and makes your actions more conscious.

In Ayurveda Gotu Kola is called «A memory herb». Remedies made from the gotu kola herb have been known to thin the blood of the person, at the same time when used in larger dosages, the herb has been shown to aid in lowering elevated blood sugar levels in patients. It is believed that the ability of Gotu kola to change the level of sugar in the blood causes the effect of improving memory.

Clinically proven that Gotu kola reduces blood pressure, frequency of contractions of the heart muscle and improves peripheral circulation. The last effect is explained by the action of bioflavonoids, which this plant contains, they relax the muscle tissue of circulatory system. It has also been indicated for chronic venous insufficiency. Centella strengthens veins by repairing the connective tissues surrounding veins and decreasing capillary fragility.

Gotu kola gives positive effects in the treatment of heart disease of Pitta type. Heart disease of Pitta type characterises by burning sensation in the heart area, possible attacks of sweating, feeling of heat throughout the body. The face is usually red, the eyes reddened and inflamed, vertigo, sometimes with loss of consciousness, vomiting of bile acid content. Stool is yellowish unformed. There is a tendency to nosebleeds. In the emotional sphere irritability, anger and outbreaks of rage are dominated, which further worsens the condition. Brahmi is also prescribed for heart failure, high blood pressure problems and edema.

Gotu kola contains volatile oils that cause a diuretic effect and improve blood composition. Found that Gotu kola triterpenes give additional detoxicating effect, stimulating liver function. Brahmi, taken in equal parts with turmeric and barberry, soothes the liver, reduces cravings for sweets, fat and alcohol. Gotu kola has a positive effect on the liver and of itself, as the soothing "fiery" emotions, which largely contribute to liver disease. With regular use of gotu kola eliminates the tendency to overeat, due to which, it is useful to use for the treatment of overweight and obesity. To do this, gotu kola can also be used in mixtures with sweet flag (Air) or skullcap.

Gotu kola is used to treat attrition because of anorexia (aversion to food). In this case, it is good to prepare the composition of the four parts of ashwagandha, two parts gotu kola and one part cardamom and fennel.
Brahmi is used to treat urinary tract infections and kidney stones to relieve pain. A good composition for the treatment of urinary tract infections can be prepared from pipsissewa, plantain, marshmallow (althaea), coriander, lemongrass and gotu kola in equal parts. Brahmi cleans urogenital system. It is useful for any sexually transmitted diseases.

Brahmi is useful in the treatment of bronchitis with fever and as a soothing cough remedy. Can be also used in the complex treatment of asthma of Pitta-type, which characterises by the discharge of yellowish sputum, fever, sweating, irritability and the need for cool air. Seizures occurs at the time of Pitta – noon or midnight. Brahmi is also used to treat allergic rhinitis. Good composition is prepared from powdered herbs: gotu kola, calamus, angelica, ungulates and licorice in equal parts. If you are of Vata and Kapha type, this composition is used with honey, if Pitta constitution - with aloe juice or other bitter herbs.

Beneficial effects makes the use of gotu kola in PMS of Pitta type, which is manifested by irritability, anger, desire to argue, and sometimes outbursts of rage. May be diarrhea, thirst, sweating, chilling, feeling the heat in the upper body. The skin may appear rash and acne. Menstrual flow, as a rule, abundant or even excessive, with clots. Menstruation usually begins early. The condition can worsen at noon and midnight - the time of Pitta.

The use of gotu kola after removal of the uterus and miscarriage is approved, as well as when endometritis, endometriosis.

Gotu kola is useful in the treatment of diabetes in the acute phase. It can be used with Ghee butter.

It’s good to apply gotu kola in the postoperative period to relieve stress and heal nervous tissue. Brahmi is a valuable tool for the purification of the nervous system and eliminate the inflammation in it. As a general tonic for the nervous system it is recommended to representatives of Kapha-type in composition with honey gotu kola and calamus (sweet flag) in equal parts.

Gotu kola is used in the treatment of cancer of Pitta-type, which is accompanied by anger, irritability, resentment or hatred. Characterized the inflammation or infection of tumors, bleeding, burning sensation. Cancer of Pitta-type mostly affects skin,eyes and liver. Brahmi is useful for children as a remedy for the mind, cleanses the blood and calmes the emotions, especially when hyperactivity disorder, arising from excessive consumption of sugar or attenuation of liver function. It is also said to combat stress and depression.

Brahmi is very useful for people of an old age, it gives excellent results for preserving the memory and brain cell renewal. This is the best remedy to improve your hearing. The gotu kola is also used in the form of an oil extract to promote hair growth in people affected by balding and hair loss.

Brahmi is also used to treat various skin problems, like abscesses and skin eruptions caused by different infections. Highly effective compounds of this plant also stimulate the synthesis of lipids and proteins necessary for healthy skin; strengthens the adrenal glands and cleanses the blood to treat skin impurities. Also minor burns, scars, scleroderma, skin ulcers, varicose veins. For treating leprosy and other skin diseases it is given as an ointment or dusting powder.
The gotu kola is used in treating children for dysentery, a few freshly plucked leaves of the herb is given to the affected children along with the daily meal. It also has properties which alleviate all kinds of abdominal disorders.

If you are of Pitta constitution, then gotu kola is taken separately or with the addition of calamus in a ratio of 4:1 or 8:1, the mixture is mixed with butter Ghee. If Vata constitution, then gotu kola in the mixture should be less or equal to the quantity of calamus, the mixture is taken with Ghee or with warm water.

The same mixture is used to treat failure or degenerative processes of the nervous system (multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease). Gotu kola has a positive effect for insomnia, headaches, epilepsy, neurotic states. Brahmi with Ghee, along with ashwagandha, can be used for problems related to mistakes in the practice of meditation, or when Kundalini is out of control.

A considerable reputation this herb has acquired in recent times, as an “aphrodisiac” - a chemical agent that has an ability to stimulate and promote sexual desire as well as heighten sexual ability in people. Remedies made from the gotu kola are also used to boost fertility and are used in the role of a tonic for improving poor digestion. A cold poultice of the fresh herb is used as an external application in rheumatism, rheumatoid arthritis, elephantiasis and hydrocele.

Gotu kola is also used to reduce the psychological addiction to tobacco, alcohol and other drug use.

Part in use: herb

Energetics: bitter / cooling / sweet.

Raca - bitter, astringent; vriiya - sweet; vipak - cold, Prabhav - improves mental ability.

Effect on the doshas: Vata, Pitta and Kapha in balance

Tissue: effect on all tissue elements except the reproductive, mainly on the blood, bone marrow and nervous tissue.

Systems: nervous, circulatory, digestive.

Indications: Traditionally Brahmi is used as a rejuvenating tonic, as well as it is used to treat nervous disorders, epilepsy, senility and premature aging, leprosy and skin diseases; it improves memory, reflexes, increases libido; has wound healing properties, treats rheumatism, blood diseases, congestive heart failure, urinary tract infections, venereal diseases, hepatitis and high blood pressure and has good anti-inflammatory action.

Internally it has been valued as a tonic and is used in bronchitis, asthma, gastric catarahh, leucorrhoea, kidney troubles, urethritis and dropsy. A decoction of very young shoots is given for haemorrhoids.

Caution: may increase itching, and in large doses can cause headaches or momentary loss of consciousness. Excessive use can badly affect the kidneys.

The organic compounds present in the gotu kola have been investigated for their properties in many studies. Initial research conducted during the 1990s suggested that
the asiaticocide and thankuniside fractions in the herb may actually reduce fertility in people. This shocking discovery naturally contrasts with one of the main traditional uses of the gotu kola in India—where it was usually taken to boost fertility by people.

18. Haritaki

Terminalia chebula/ Harada/ Black myrobalan/ Indian gall-nut, ink nut

Haritaki - means one, which is originated from Hari’s (God's) home or which is green in nature; here green stands for faith and fertility, or that carries away all the illnesses from the body.

This plant is widely used in ayurvedic medicine practice and traditional medicine. The fruit originates in Northern and Central India. Types of Haritaki fruit depending upon geographical region include Putana and Jivanti version.

Haritaki has proven gastrokinetic effect i.e. it helps in moving the contents of stomach earlier. So it can be used after surgeries and as adjuvant with other drugs that interfere with gastric motility as antihistaminics, atropine like drugs. One compound Chebulagic acid from Haritaki has shown antispasmodic action like that of Papaverine. Haritaki can serve to act as an effective alternative to modern prokinetic drugs like metaclopramide.

Gallic acid and its ethyl ester, isolated from Terminalia chebula, displayed potent antimicrobial activity against several bacteria, including methicillin-resistant strains of Staphylococcus aureus. A crude extract of Terminalia chebula is reported to have potent and broad spectrum antibacterial activity against human pathogenic Gram positive and Gram negative bacteria.

Haritaki is reported to have antiherpes simplex virus type 1 activity. Haritaki showed a significant inhibitory activity on the effects on human immunodeficiency virus-1 reverse transcriptase. A water extract of Terminalia chebula was found to have an antifungal activity.

Besides this Haritaki is also useful in management of respiratory discomfort, cough, urinary disorders (including Diabetes mellitus), hemorrhoids, skin diseases, edematous conditions, assimilatory disorders, chronic fever, vomiting, hiccough, heart diseases, jaundice (and other liver and spleen disorders) renal stones and anemia.
If taken after meals Haritaki prevents imbalance of any of the humors due to bad food or drink. Haritaki gives different results according to the mode of taking i.e. when chewed it ignites the digestive fire, when taken after making a paste it ensures the timely evacuation of the feces and when taken after roasting it balances all the three Doshas.

According to Charak, the most eminent Ayurvedic physician, Haritaki is the best fruit for rejuvenation and disease cure. Haritaki is the remedy for rejuvenation for all the seasons. This is called as the "Ritu Haritaki". In rainy season it should be taken with Saindhava (Rock salt), in autumn with sugar, in early winter with Shunthi, in late winter with Pippali, in spring season with honey and in summer season it should be taken with Guda (Jaggery).

Bio energetics:
Rasa (Taste)- Haritaki contains all the six tastes except the Lavana (salty one)
Guna (Characteristics)- Laghu (Light); Ruksha (Rough)
Veerya (Potency)- Ushna (Warm)
Vipaka (Post digestion effect)- Madhura (Sweet)
Prabhava (Special action an herb works which cannot be explained on logical parameters)- Tridoshahara (Pacifies all the three bio humors)

Actions according to Ayurveda:
Deepana- Haritaki ignites the digestive fire making even micro nutrients available to the body
Medhya- it is a very good nervine tonic
Rasayani- Rejuvenates the body
Chakshushya-it is a tonic for eyes
Bruhamni- Increases the bulk of the body
Anulomani- Means it is having the property to digest the undigested Malas (Removable wastes of gastric system) and expel them out of the body through anus.
Aayushya/Vayasa sthapani- Means it enhances the longevity of the person
Paushtiki- Haritaki nourishes the body up to the tissue level
Lekhani- it scrapes out the unnecessary deposits and toxins out of the body
Hrudya- Cardiac tonic

Effect on the doshas: Haritaki maintains the balance of all the three Doshas. When taken with Lavana (Rock salt) it pacifies the aggravated Kapha, with sugar the Pitta and with Ghruta (Indian clarified butter) the Vata.

Useful part:
Fruits

Doses:
Powder- 3-6 gm

How to identify the Haritaki fruit is good:
The good fruit will go to the bottom of the glass having water in it.

Precautions to be taken while taking Haritaki:
Haritaki should be sparingly used in the lean individuals, severe debility, while fasting, mental depression, vitiated Pitta conditions, in pregnancy and in lactation it can decrease milk production.
Hareetaki is among the most interesting plants of the Earth. In Ayurvedic and Tibetan medicine it is often called the “king of all herbs”. It is believed that when healers of East heard about this plant, their bodies started to tremble with delight. In Ayurvedic science it is also believed that Hareetaki can help to get rid of a hundred ailments.

Although all parts of the plant have a therapeutic effect (the roots remove bone diseases, stem heals the muscles, bark treats skin problems, the branches clean the vessels, leaves treat hollow organs), Ayurvedic physicians use mainly fruits, because Hareetaki fruits normalize the function of the neuroendocrine system and all the body organs.

Energy-informational matrix of the fruit is similar to the human etheric body and energy-informational field of the Earth. This means that Hareetaki has the tuning fork action on “sthula” and “sukshma sarira” (gross & subtle body) channels, which are responsible for the homeostasis (constant internal medium).

The body contains several channels through which the doshas, dhatus and malas travel called srotamsi (singular is ‘srota’). The impairment movement or obstruction of these factors through a srota is called srotorodha. Srotorodha interrupts proper tissue metabolism, causing the regurgitation of the doshas, dhatus and malas, and the local formation of ama.

Ama then moves into the other srotamsi and circulates through the body, promoting systemic congestion. A srota is either bahya (‘external channel’) or abhyantra (‘internal channel’). The bahya srotamsi include the two nostrils, the two ears, the two eyes, the mouth, the urethra and the rectum. Females have two additional bahya srotamsi: the two lactiferous glands of the breasts (‘stanyavaha srotamsi’), and the cervix (‘artavaha srota’). There are thirteen abhyantra srotamsi, each of which relates to specific organs, and are increased and vitiated by specific factors.

Each of these channels contains coded information on how various tissues, hormones, enzymes and other biologically active substances should function.

These subtle channels are connecting through a special center of the etheric body, called marma. Marmas should be understood as junction or meeting places of the 5 organic principles: ligaments, vessels, muscles, bones and joints, with the four types of vessels being the nerves, lymph, arteries and veins.

Marma through the neuroendocrine system regulates the functions of all the human body organs.

Unfortunately, currently we are under constant influence of the high magnetic field sources radiation, which are high voltage transmission lines, mobile phones, computers, televisions, microwave ovens and other industrial and household appliances. So, it is obvious that ethereal human matrix with all its centers and channels varies greatly and leads to disruption of homeostasis.

Such deviations can lead to serious chronic diseases. Here we should add that the distortion of our “tuning fork” activity can easily take place if a human consciousness is overflown with various negative stereotypes such as: greed, hatred, jealousy, condemnation, fear, pride etc.

Thanks to God, Hareetaki fruits are able to read the missing information from the matrix of the Earth and transfer it to the field structure of the human body, restoring the function of all marma centers.

The most powerful antioxidants were found in Hareetaki fruits, which belong to the group of anthocyanidins.
Due to their ability to neutralize free radicals, they suspend the damage of arteries endothelium; inhibition of cellular immunity, including antitumor; violations of the colloidal equilibrium of bile and urine. It is also believed that this plant is able to activate the antitoxic function of all cells; Hareetaki normalizes the state of the cells of the brain and spinal cord. If a person uses the fruits of this plant regularly, the threshold of adaptation to external negative influences raises substantially, enhances memory and improves learning ability. In the case of destruction of myelinated fibers (scattered and amyotrophic sclerosis), Hareetaki stimulates its regeneration.

19. Arjuna

Terminalia Arjuna/White Marudah/Arjun

Terminalia Arjuna is a deciduous tree (about 60-70 feet height), is abundantly found in India and Ceylon, also in Myanmar and Sri Lanka.

Arjuna - means the white one, bright or clear. Arjuna is a plant that makes body and mind clear, spotless and clean of all impurities. Such an empty and stainless mind is ready to receive divine wisdom and the highest understanding. In the Rig Veda, the clear, sunny and bright day is referred to as arjunam. When one takes Arjuna bark powder with milk/ clarified butter/ jaggery, he enjoys the whole life free from diseases.

Ancient medical scientists have mentioned the remarkable cardioprotective, heart muscle strengthening properties of Arjuna herb. It helps in treating heart failure and coronary artery disease. Arjuna has been shown to help reverse hardening of the arteries.

Its stem bark possesses glycosides, large quantities of flavonoids, tannins and minerals. Flavonoids have been detected to exert antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and lipid lowering effects while glycosides are cardiotonic, thus making Terminalia arjuna unique amongst currently used medicinal plants.

Experimental studies have revealed its bark exerting significant inotropic and hypotensive effect, increasing coronary artery flow and protecting myocardium against ischemic damage. It has also been detected to have mild diuretic, antithrombotic, prostaglandin E2 enhancing and hypolipidaemic activity. So, due to its hypolipidemic activity and also the diuretic property it acts against hypertension.

In heart diseases milk boiled with Arjuna bark should be taken with sugar/decoction of Panchamoola/ Bala/ Madhuka.
Terminalia arjuna exhibit cardioprotective because of the antioxidant nature of several of the constituent flavonoids and oligomeric proanthocyanidins, while positive inotropic effects may be caused by the saponin glycosides.

Research suggests that Terminalia is useful in alleviating the pain of angina pectoris, Arjuna reduces angina episodes much better than nitroglycerin. In one study, angina episodes were cut in half by the Arjuna, with none of the nasty side effects. Plus, it can be used as long as you like, without fear it'll stop working.

Terminalia may also be protective against gastric ulcers, such as those caused by NSAIDs. One study demonstrated that the aqueous extract of the bark of Terminalia Arjuna could protect the liver and kidney tissues probably by increasing antioxidative defense activities.

Arjuna has hypolipidemic properties, it enhances the elimination of cholesterol by accelerating the turnover of LDL-cholesterol in the liver. Lowers beta-lipoprotein lipids and the recovery of HDL components in hyperlipidemia. Arjuna can help lower cholesterol as much as 64%.

A special but easy formulation that is in wide practice owing to its efficacy is the Arjunakshirapaka. The process is easy, affordable but found to be greatly effective. It simply includes the bark of Arjuna (may be of powder form), four times the milk, and 16 times the water. The process involves the usual decoction process to boil the mixture till the amount of milk only remains. A person can make a daily use of it twice a day as a home made medicine for a better, risk free heart.

Bio energetics:
Rasa(Taste)- Kashaya(Astringent)
Guna(Characteristics)- Laghu(Light); Ruksha(Roughness)
Veerya(Potency)- Sheeta(cool and calm)
Vipaka(Post digestion effect)- Katu(Pungent)
Prabhava(Specific action for which there is no explanation as it is the inherent character of it)- Hrudya(Cardiac tonic)

Effect on Tridosha (Three bio humors) :
Arjuna pacifies the Kapha and Pitta so it is very useful in management of diseases having their origin in either Kapha/ Pitta or both.
Dosha effect - Tridoshic, KP-
Dhatu (tissue)- Plasma, blood, bone, reproductive
Srota (channel) - Circulatory, reproductive

Actions according to Ayurveda:
Hrudya- Arjuna is a cardiac tonic
Udar prashamana- it is useful in urticaria like conditions
Kshata jit- it is useful in wounds
Kshayajit- it is useful in emaciation and other similar conditions because of its nutritional value
Medohara- removes the unnecessary fat from the body
Mehahara- Arjuna is useful in urinary disorders including diabetes. It specially prevents cardiac complications of diabetes
Bhagnajit- Arjuna is a good healer in fracture. In fracture Arjuna Ksheerpaka fastens the healing process.
Indications: cardiomyopathy like Myocardial infraction, angina, coronary artery disease, heart failure, hypercholesterolemia, hypertension. In case of heart attack though it can not act against, like streptokinase or eurokinase, but regular use of it after just recovering from heart attack, reduces the chance of further attack to a great level. Besides no such Toxicity or side effects has so far be found it can be advocated to use in regular basis for a strong and well functioning heart.

Useful part: Stem, Bark

Doses: Powder- 3-6gms; Decoction with water-50-100 ml; Decoction with milk-5-10ml

20. Ashoka

[Image of Ashoka flower]

Ashoka is one of the most legendary and sacred trees of India. The Ashoka is a rain-forest evergreen tree. It has fascinating bright orange-yellow and very fragrant flowers which later turn red. The flowering season is around April and May. It is found in central and eastern Himalayas as well as on the west coast of Bombay.

Ashoka is a Sanskrit word meaning “without grief“ or the one, who gives no grief. In India married Hindu women eat the flower buds of Saraca asoca on the "Ashok Shasthi day" to guard their children against grief and sorrow.

The Hindu people regard it as sacred, being dedicated to Kama Deva, God of Love. The tree is a symbol of Love. Its beautiful, delicately perfumed flowers are used in temple decoration. There are also festivals associated with this flower. Lord Buddha was born under the Ashoka tree, so it is planted in Buddhist monasteries.

In India, drinking water in which the flowers have been washed is widely considered a protection against grief. Such water is a flower essence, its effects are recognized by Hindu people for centuries. It is a healer for deep seated sorrow, sadness, grief and disharmony. The divine energy of this plant works very gently and changes one's perception of the sorrow.
The Vrikshadevatas - the gods of trees who represent fertility are known to dance around the tree, and are worshipped by childless women. The tree is regarded as a guardian of female chastity. The womenfolk of Chhattisgarh boil the bark of Ashoka in cow's milk, add sugar and consume it once a day for three days and repeat the course after three months to prevent gynaecological disorders. So, Ashoka is also seen as a remedy for women health.

The essence also helps women to be fertile. It is said that 'weeping woman, weeping womb,' in that the woman's emotional state affects her reproductive organs. Therefore, the essence, like the herb, helps in the uterine problems like excessive bleeding, irregular menstrual periods and infertility.

The bark of Saraca asoca contains the estrogenic compound ketosterol, which is effective against menorrhagia due to uterine fibroids and internal hemorrhoids and also enhances the restoration of the endometrium and stops bleeding. The bark of Ashoka is reported to have a stimulating effect on the endometrium and ovarian tissue and is useful in menorrhagia due to uterine fibroids, in leucorrhea and in internal bleeding. It is useful in all cases of uterine bleeding where ergot is indicated.

The anticancer principle from Saraca asoca flowers indicated 50 percent cytotoxicity (in vitro) in Dalton's lymphoma ascites and Sarcoma-180 tumour cells at a concentration of 38 mug and 54 mug respectively, with no activity against normal lymphocytes but preferential activity for lymphocytes derived from leukemia patients (ALL). Tritiated thymidine incorporation studies in dicate the mechanism of action of the agent at the site of DNA synthesis.

Bio energetics:
Rasa (Taste)- Kashaya (Astringent); Tikta (Bitter)
Guna (Characteristics)- Laghu (Light); Ruksha (Rough)
Veerya (Potency)- Sheeta (Cool and calm)
Vipaka (Post digestion effect)- Katu (Pungent)
Prabhava (Special action on human physiology for which we have no explanation how it works so)- Vedana sthapana (Useful in management of all painful conditions including spasmodic and congestive pain of dysmenorrhoea)

Effect on Tridosha:
Ashoka pacifies Kapha and Pitta i.e. it is useful in management of all diseases resulting from the aggravation of Kapha and Pitta.

Actions: spasmodic, oxytocic, uterotonic, antibacterial, anti-implantation, antitumour, antiprogestational, antioestrogenic, activity against menorrhagia and anticancer.

Actions according to Ayurveda:
Vedana sthapana- Ashoka is useful in management of all painful conditions
Grahi- it improves digestion and assimilation, so the person passes stool with normal consistency
Varnya- it improves complexion of the body
Asrigdara nashanam- Ashoka is valued highly in management of excessive bleeding during menstruation
Shoshajit- it is useful in management of emaciation and under nutrition conditions
Apachijit- it is useful in management of inflammation of lymph nodes
Trishanashnam- Ashoka alleviates excessive thirst
Daha shamanam- Ashoka alleviates burning sensation
Krimighna- kills all infectious agents
Shothajit- it is useful in management of all edematous conditions
Vish asrajit- Ashoka is useful in toxicities and management of all diseases which originate from blood.

Useful part: Bark, seeds, flowers

Doses: powder- 3-6gm; decoction-50 ml

Some useful combinations of Ashoka: Ashokarishta; Ashoka ghruta

21. Bibhitaki

Terminalia bellirica/ Belleric myrobalan/ Bahera

Bibhitaki - As it is said to make a person fearless from all types of diseases. Bahera is a proven anti-atherogenic agent that reduces cholesterol and good for eyes, hair and voice.

Above all, this plant is known as a mild cleaner small and large intestine from the products of incomplete metabolism, and parasites. In this case, it normalizes its tone and peristalsis.

The fruit also gives a good cholagogic effect. In addition, Bibhitaki removes excess mucus from the bronchial tubes and restores the cough reflex.

Charaka includes this plant among those which are useful in fever and good laxatives.

It helps in diseases of Rasa, Rakta, Mamsa and Medas Dhatu.

Terminalia bellirica works specially on throat and upper GIT; it has curative effect on hoarseness of voice, excessive thirst, nausea and vomiting.

Along with Haritaki and Amalaki its combination is known as Triphala, which is a good combination for eyes and digestive system. It works as an anti-aging combination as well. (Bhav Prakash Nighantu)

In an open clinical trial of 93 patients suffering from various respiratory conditions Bibhitaki was found to have anti-asthmatic, anti-spasmodic, expectorant and anti-tussive activities.
The compound 3,4,5-trihydroxy benzoic acid (gallic acid) isolated from Terminalia belerica was evaluated for its hepatoprotective activity against carbon tetrachloride (CCI4)-induced physiological and biochemical alterations in the liver.

The effect of T. belerica, was evaluated in experimentally-induced hypercholesterolemia and atherosclerosis in rabbits. T. belerica was shown to reduce the levels of lipids in hypercholesterolemic animals, and promoted a significant decrease in liver and heart lipids. So it can be used in cardiovascular problems.

An extract of Terminalia belerica showed significant inhibitory activity on human immunodeficiency (HIV) virus-1 reverse transcriptase.

This plant also possesses an antimalarial activity and antifungal activity.

Useful part: fruit

Bio Energetics:
Rasa (Taste) - Kashaya (Astringent)
Guna (Characteristics) - Ruksha, Laghu (Light)
Veerya (Potency) - Ushna (Warm)
Vipaka (Post digestion effect) - Madhura (Sweet)

Effect on Tridosha (Three bio humors):
Bibhitaki has the unique characteristic to pacify all the three bio humors but it is specially indicated in diseases resulting from aggravated Kapha.

Actions according to Ayurveda:
Bhedanam - Bibhitaki softenes the hardimpacted feces in the rectum
Netrahitam - Bibhitaki is good for eyes
Keshyam - Bibhitaki rejuvenates hair
Vaiswaryanashanam - Bibhitaki is useful in hoarseness of voice involving any etiology
Madakrit - Bibhitaki is a natural sedative so very useful in disturbances like insomnia etc.
Kasanashanam - Bibhitaki is useful in management of cough
Kriminashanam - Bibhitaki helps in management of infectious conditions in general
Trit chhardi hari - Bibhitaki relieves excessive thirst, nausea and vomiting

Doses:
Powder 3-6 gm

Some useful combinations with Bahera:
Bibhitaka tail; Triphala choorna; Phalatrikadi kwatha; Lawangadi vati

22. Licorice
Glycyrrhiza glabra/ Liquirita officinalis/ Yashtimadhu / Mulethi/ Chinese Licorice/ Gan Cao/ Sweet Wood

It was one of the most widely known medicines in ancient history, records of its use include Assyrian tablets of around 2000 BC and Chinese herbals of the same period. Theophrastos of Lesbos, writing in the fourth century BC wrote that 'it has the property of quenching thirst if one holds it in the mouth'. Dioscorides gave the plant its botanical name (Greek glukos = sweet, riza = root). It is grown in India, Spain, Iran, Russia, China & Italy. Licorice’s affinity for the endocrine system makes this herb remarkable, which when used judiciously can be very helpful in treating many human ailments. This is because of glycyrrhizin which has a structure similar to hormones produced by the adrenal glands. The root enables the glands to produce more hormone cortisol that encourages the kidney to retain more water and sodium that thereby regulates blood pressure. In cases where the adrenal glands do not function normally, licorice comes in very handy. It stimulates the adrenal glands and is very useful in conditions like Addison’s disease and other adrenal insufficiencies, such as hypoglycemia, where the adrenal glands cease to function normally. Its antiallergic effect makes it very useful in treating allergic rhinitis, hay fever, conjunctivitis and bronchial asthma.

Licorice has mild estrogenic properties and can be very helpful during menopause. It gets these properties from the steroid like compounds present in it which can change to estrogen precursors like estradiol and estrone. Licorice can act as a mild laxative and can also relieve indigestion and heartburn by lowering stomach acid levels.

Liquorice affects the body’s endocrine system as it contains isoflavones (phytoestrogens). It might lower the amount of serum testosterone slightly, but whether it affects the amount of free testosterone is unclear.

Licorice has an anti-inflammatory activity similar to cortisone and has been found useful for arthritis and allergies.

Licorice and DGL also have a demulcent action and have been used for coughs and other bronchial complaints. Glycyrrhiza is widely used in bronchial problems such as
catarrh, bronchitis, cold, flu and coughs. It reduces irritation of the throat and yet has an expectorant action. It produces its demulcent and expectorant effects. It is a potent healing agent for tuberculosis, where its effects have been compared to hydrocortisone.

Glycyrrhiza is also effective in helping to reduce fevers (glycyretinic acid has an effect like aspirin). Animal studies suggest that licorice may reduce stomach irritation as well as the risk of stomach ulcers associated with aspirin. Licorice has an antibacterial action as well. Ghruta (Ghee) - indian clarified butter treated with Yashtimadhu should be used for the management of pain on a cut of a sharp weapon.

It is useful in the treatment of chronic inflammations such as arthritis and rheumatic diseases, anti-inflammatory, chronic skin conditions, and autoimmune diseases in general.

The herb is popularly used to ease irritation and for inflammation and spasm in the digestive tract. It is used as an aid for healing stomach and duodenal ulcers, and in moderate amounts may soothe an upset stomach.

Liquorice can be used to treat ileitis, leaky gut syndrome, irritable bowel syndrome and Crohn's disease as it is antispasmodic in the bowels. The herb acts on the liver and helps increase bile flow. Licorice at low doses can help lower serum cholesterol levels by stimulating the liver to manufacture cholesterol and excrete it in bile. Licorice is used extensively to treat a variety of ailments which include kidney cancer, tooth decay, toxic shock syndrome, addictions, Bell's palsy, viral infection. In different countries of the world they are constantly finding new uses for the herb. The licorice root is actually one of the most popular herbal remedies in the world alongside the ginger root. Traditional Chinese medicine used this plant to treat stress-related symptoms by boosting the adrenal gland functions of the body. It is also widely used in hypoglycemic patients to detoxify the body and to purify the blood and liver.

The compound glycyrrhizic acid, found in liquorice, is now routinely used throughout Japan for the treatment and control of chronic viral hepatitis. Physicians in Japan use licorice to treat hepatitis B as glycyrrhizin interferes with the hepatitis B surface antigen. Licorice is synergistic with interferon against hepatitis A virus and it is also used at times to treat the hepatitis C virus. The liver can be protected from the harmful effects of chemotherapy with licorice, say researchers.

Licorice is quite useful in bringing back the liveliness when one is feeling tired or fatigue especially after surgery or during convalescence. It is a good stress reliever- both physical and emotional. Various scientific studies suggest that Yashtimadhu also acts as a memory enhancer and mental rejuvenator. According to Charaka "For rejuvenation of brain tissue i.e. to improve one's memory and analytical abilities the person should take Yashtimadhu powder with milk."

Licorice also has rasayana properties.

In traditional Chinese medicine, liquorice is commonly used in herbal formulae to "harmonize" the other ingredients in the formula and to carry the formula to the twelve "regular meridians" and to relieve a spasmodic cough.

China has found another use for licorice; licorice is used to treat pesticide poisoning. They consider licorice a powerful antitoxin. It is thought that licorice can also curb the malaria causing parasite, Plasmodium falciparum. The herb induces anti-inflammatory activity by its effects on adrenal steroids. Another important use for licorice is in helping to prolong the survival time of transplanted tissues. Also Licorice is known as an anti-viral agent that slows down the progression of the HIV infection.
In herbalism it is used in the Hoxsey anti-cancer formula, and is a considered adaptogen which helps regulate the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis. It can also be used for auto-immune conditions including lupus, scleroderma, rheumatoid arthritis and animal dander allergies.

Liquorice may be useful in conventional and naturopathic medicine for both mouth ulcers and peptic ulcers. Liquorice is also a mild laxative and may be used as a topical antiviral agent for shingles, ophthalmic, oral or genital herpes. Other health benefits of the plant include treating skin conditions such as psoriasis, eczema, canker sores and rashes.

Cautions:
Admittedly, the roots have their own share of side effects. Since the plant can raise blood pressure levels, people with high blood pressure should not use it as well as people with a history of diabetes, heart diseases, stroke, kidney diseases and glaucoma. Furthermore, it also induces the conversion of testosterone hormones into estrogen, which means that people with estrogen sensitive conditions such as breast and uterine cancer should not use it. Men who suffer from erectile dysfunction should also avoid the root as it’s known to decrease testosterone levels. While some people can tolerate 5 to 6 gram doses of standard licorice per day, high amounts should not be congested for more than two to three weeks without medical supervision. The recommended dose is a 300 milligram tablet taken three times a day before meals.

Also excess consumption of licorice can lead to the classic symptoms of hypertension, with edema, increased blood pressure, potassium loss, and muscular weakness. The Deglycyrrhizinated form is most often used to avoid the hypertensive side effects of the glycyrrhetinic acid in whole Licorice. It has no toxic effect on human body when consumed in limited dosage.

The compounded carbenoxolone is derived from liquorice. Some studies indicate it may inhibit an enzyme in the brain that is involved in making stress-related hormones, which have been associated with age-related mental decline.

Consuming liquorice can prevent hyperkalemia. Large doses of glycyrrhizinic acid and glycyrrhetinic acid in liquorice extract can lead to hypokalemia and serious increases in blood pressure, a syndrome known as apparent mineralocorticoid excess.

**Bio Energetics:**

Rasa - Madhura (sweet)
Guna - Guru (heavy), Snigdha (unctuous)
Veerya - Sheeta (cool and calm)
Vipaka - Madhura

**Effect on Tridosha:**

It pacifies the Vata and Pitta bio humors i.e. useful in management of diseases resulting from aggravation of either Vata/ Pitta or both.

**Actions according to Ayurveda:**

Chakshushya- rejuvenator for eyes
Shukrala - improves quality and quantity of sperms in semen
Keshya - enhances the luster of hairs and make them look blacker than before
Swarya - improves voice
Bala varna krit - increases one's body strength and improves complexion
Kshayapaha - useful in managing under nutritive and emaciating conditions
Vajikara - increases sexual desire and power so useful in erectile disorders and premature ejaculation
Medhya - improves ones memory and analytical abilities
Vedanahara - a potent pain killer

Useful part: roots

Doses: powder 3-5 gm

Some combinations with Yashtimadhu: Yashtyadi kwatha; Yashtyadi choorna, Yashtimadhvadi tail.

23. Garcinia Cambogia

Garcinia Cambogia/ Kokum <Garcinia indica> (in Marathi and Konkani cuisines)/ Kudampuli (Kuda-puli)/ Goraka (Sri Lanka)/ Bala/ Chikana Red mango/ Brindall berry/ Gambooge/ Malabar Tamarind

G. cambogia or G. quaesita is a subtropical species of Garcinia native to Indonesia. Garcinia cambogia, an exotic fruit grown in South India, has been used to impart a distinctive sour flavour to Indian cooking. It is commonly found in the evergreen and shola forests of Western Ghats in India up to 6,000 ft. high.

Kudampuli is a small yellowish pumpkin-shaped sour fruit and is highly praised in Ayurveda and alternative medicine for its excellent anti-colic action. For any problems related to colon, the large intestine, this is a great medicine. It is also a powerful anti-spasmodic, preventing spasms in intestines. This is also good for inflammatory bowel diseases.

The fruit of Garcinia cambogia has been traditionally used in food preparation and cooking. Garcinia is considered to make foods more filling and satisfying and has been used routinely for many centuries with notoxicity.

In Indian traditional medicine, this species was prescribed for edema, delayed menstruation, constipation and intestinal parasites. In the form of precoction, it was also used for rheumatism and bowel complaints.

Garcinia and its active ingredient, HCA (hydroxycitric acid) have been extensively studied for over thirty years and found to be effective in inhibiting lipogenesis, suppressing appetite and encouraging weight-loss in ratory animals.
There are various products available for obesity and fat control they are generally stimulants which have side effect on central nervous system. HCA on the other hand, works via peripheral mechanism to promote weight loss and assist the body's natural cycle in the liver and elsewhere, there by influencing the metabolism of calories. So, Garcinia decreases the rate of dietary carbohydrate conversion to fat and cholesterol, while increasing glycogen production.

It suppresses appetite thus reducing food consumption. It also potentially increases caloric burning there by elevating the body’s production of heat. It is nature’s answer to weight loss. Some other herbs like St John wort, Chromium and 5 HTP are used with G. cambogia for helping the overweight persons.

Kudampuli is known for its medicinal values in Ayurveda. It helps to promote digestion, and a decoction (kashayam) made out of it is used against arthritis and some uterine deceases. In Ayurveda kudampuli is also used for treating stomach ulcers, as carminative and antiseptic. There are claims that kudampuli may reduce cholesterol levels. It is also widely accepted as a weight reducing agent; several anti-obesity formulations containing dried and ground kudampuli rind are available in the market. New research indicates that kudampuli may be useful in diabetes management as well. More recently, it has been proved that Garcinia cambogia has a hepatore trophic ability against external toxins, such as alcohol. A recent study showed that Garcinia prevented liver cells from becoming fibrotic and stopped cell damage caused by high blood lipid levels.

Preparations:
The green fruit will turn yellow when ripe. Once fully ripe, fruits are collected, cut in half, deseeded and are sun-dried for a day. The sun-dried fruit halves are smoked till black, and are rubbed with a mixture of salt and oil before transferring to earthenware pots and tightly sealed. These will stay fresh for years. Before use, wash the pieces under running water quickly to remove any dust accumulated from the drying and smoking process, then soak these for 10 minutes in water. Kudampuli pieces are added along with the water in which it was soaked in to curries and it gives a delicious sour taste that is so unique.

Other ailments treated with Garcinia Cambogia are: rheumatism, bowel complaints, piles, bilious affections; acts as antioxidant, anticatarrhal, demulcent, thermogenic, cardiotonic, anti-cancer, edema, intestinal parasites or antihelminthic

Ayurvedic Properties:
Guna – Ruksh (dry), laghu
Virya – Ushna (hot)
Rasa – Amal (sour)

In use: fruit and bark of roots; paste and oil. Oil is used in early healing of wounds and skin related disorders.
Herbal Remedy - Strong Health and Longevity! http://herbalsatt.blogspot.com/

24. Gokshura
Tribulus terrestris/ Land caltrops/ Puncture wine

It is native to warm temperate and tropical regions of the Old World in southern Europe, southern Asia, throughout Africa and Australia. It can thrive even in desert climates and poor soil. Like many weedy species, this plant has many common names, including: puncturevine, caltrop, cathead, yellow vine, goathead, burra gokharu and bindii.

Gokshura is an amazing herb which is regarded as the best known ayurvedic medicine for the rejuvenation of genitourinary tract health. This herbal medication is extremely effective in assuaging numerous urinary diseases such as urolithiasis which is caused due to the agglomeration of calculi in the urinary tract, causing obstruction in the passage of urine.

This herb effectively removes the urinary stones from the urinary tract, thereby allowing the free flow of urine. Besides promoting the flow of urine, this medicine would calm and soothe the inner cell membrane of the urinary tract. Gokshura also works to stop bleeding in the urinary tract.

It is a well-known medication for restoring kidney functions and proper regulation of urinary composition. If you have renal disorders like cystitis, kidney stone, incontinence, then this medicine would be quite beneficial for your problem, as it is very rich in salts of silicic acid, which prevents the formation of kidney stones.

In kidney stones Gokshura seed powder should be taken with honey and goat milk. It results in crushing of stone with in a week and the crushed stone comes out with urine. (Sushruta)

Gokshura is the best among the herbs useful in painful urination and to pacify the aggravated Vata. (Charaka)

It is also useful for diseases like gout and impotence.

Gokshura is regarded as a superb medication for prostate gland disorders. It mitigates many urinary problems caused due to prostate disorders. It mainly works by cleansing and rejuvenating the organs present within our lower abdomen such as urinary bladder, prostate etc.

Gokshura is a powerful aphrodisiac, which is especially effective in improving libido.

It efficiently improves sexual activities in male and female body. Gokshura is often used to alleviate sexual disorders like impotency and infertility. It is also useful in improving the quality of semen.

By enhancing the testosterone level in male body and it helps in building a healthy muscular body. The main advantage of using this herbal product lies in its working
process. Gokshura does not directly discharge any hormone, it simply stimulates our natural hormone production to maintain the normal level of testosterone.

Gokshura is useful for heart problems like angina. It lowers the risk of heart attack by reducing the cholesterol level in the blood stream. It could be quite effective in reducing your blood pressure level, hypertension and blood sugar. This herb is also found to have antibiotic and antitumor properties and has also shown anticarcinogenic activity against liver cancer.

Gokshura is a wonder herb, which revitalizes your essential organs to improve the natural immunity.

This herbal remedy is quite useful for degenerative diseases, like diabetes mellitus and diabetes insipidus.

For respiratory discomfort and all edematous conditions, Gokshura powder should be taken with Ashwagandha powder and honey. (Raja martanda)

Gokshura is also found to be quite effective in getting relief from severe headache and migraines.

Bio energetics:
Rasa - Madhura
Guna – Guru, Snigdha
Veerya - Sheeta
Vipaka - Madhura

Effect on Tridosha:
Gokshura pacifies Vata and Pitta doshas i.e. useful in management of diseases resulting from aggravation of Vata/Kapha or both.

Actions according to Ayurveda:
Bala krut - Gokshura increases the strength of the body
Vasti shodhana - cleanses the urinary system
Deepana - ignites the digestive fire
Vrushya - increases the desire and ability for sex
Pushhtida - nourishes the body
Ashmari hara - helps in removing kidney stones from the body
Prahema nuta - it is useful in management of all urinary disorders including diabetes
Shwas kasa hara - it is useful in management of respiratory discomfort and cough
Arsha nuta - Gokshura is useful in management of hemorrhoids
Hrudroga nuta - helps in managing heart diseases

Useful part: fruit, roots, seeds

Doses: powder of fruits - 3-6 gms; decoction - 50-100 ml

Some combinations with Gokshura: Gokshuradi choorna, Gokshuradi guggulu, Gokshuradyavaleha, Dashmooladi kwatha, Gokshuradi kwatha, DashMoola (a composition of ten roots).

Side Effects of Tribulus
• One of the aftereffects of this herb is stomach disorder. Some people have complained of abdominal discomfort, bowel disorders, pain and nausea after taking this herb.
• It is a known fact that this herb boosts the sexual drive but, excessive consumption leads to testosterone buildup that can increase the hormonal levels. This can be seen in undesirable body hair and the voice lowers, especially in women.
• Another side effect is that any person taking this herb in excessive amounts could suffer from severe mood swings. People suffer from angry outbursts and this is the result of high levels of the testosterone hormone.
• It is also known to damage the lungs as there are reports of severe lung damage. The chances of causing lung problems are only if the fruit of this herb is eaten raw.
• It can even damage the muscles and the functioning of the brain and in severe cases, it can cause death. It has alkaloid chemicals that effect the neural signals of the brain. However, these side effects are rare and they occur very rarely.
• The steroidal property can cause adverse effects on the hormonal levels and the prolonged use of this herb can cause gynaecomastia or male breasts in man.
• This hormone should not be taken for anyone suffering from prostate cancer or breast cancer as it can cause damage to the hormone related cancers. Hence, this herb should not be consumed in case of cancers.

Here are some of the tips for caution:
• People suffering from stomach inflammation, ulcers, liver disorders or digestion problems must avoid taking this herb as it can lead to severe gastrointestinal problems.
• It should be avoided strictly by children, pregnant women and people suffering from schizophrenia and psychosis.
• This herb should never be consumed along with other psychoactive drugs like sedatives, antidepressants, stimulants and tranquillizers.
These are some of the adverse effects of tribulus terrestris. All you can do to avoid these side effects are to consult an ayurvedic practitioner before taking any herbal treatments.

25. Kantakari

Solanum quitense/ Kantkari/ Yellow-berried night shade/ Choti Katheri/ Katai/ Kateli

Kantakari also known as Indian Solanum, is a thorny, branched, perpetual herb. Kantakari means it is having lots of kantaka (thorns) with itself. The branches are thickly covered with tiny star-shaped hairs.
The plant has circular fruits, yellow in colour with green veins and several polished seeds, they make up the drug. Kantakari is native to India. The plant occurs all around India, often in wastelands, on roadsides and in open scrublands.

Kantakari serves several purposes, including severe ones like snake bites, dropsy, and of course perturb of respiration, abdomen, throat and gum.

The root is one of the essential medicinal ingredients used by Ayurvedic physicians, who use it to treat numerous common ailments. The drug is sour to taste and a mild laxative. Researches have evidenced that the fruits and shoots of the plant possess anti-bacterial attributes.

The herb is particularly useful in throat problems, such as sore throat and tonsillitis.

A concoction of the plant should be used as a gargle in such cases. This is prepared by constantly boiling the plant in approximately 2 litres of water after washing it exhaustively, till it reduces to half its volume and it should be sieved.

The concoction of the plant, prepared for throat disorders, is also very constructive in gum sores. For healthier results, black mustard should be boiled together with the plant.

Kantakari is useful in uncluttering catarrh and phlegm from the bronchial tubes. Roots and seeds are hence used in the treatment of respiratory diseases like asthma, bronchitis, hard breathing and cough. The decoction of the root is given with honey, to treat cough.

In any type of cough Kantakari should be taken with soup of grean gram treated with Haridra and Amalaki. Also taking clarified butter with Kantakari is very useful in management of all types of cough and respiratory discomforts.

Nasal administration of kantkari is beneficial in migraine, asthma and headache. The herb is beneficial in the treatment of cardiac diseases associated with edema, since it is a stimulant to the heart and a blood purifier.

The herb can be used to treat constipation and gas. It fortifies the stomach and encourages its action. It redresses perturbed processes of nutrition by which the organism ingests, digests, absorbs, utilises and excretes food substances and reinstates regular function of the system. The drug also owns anthelmintic (worm destroying) property and is handy in exterminating intestinal worms.

Kantakari is useful in curing dropsy, a disease marked by an undue accumulation of fluids in the tissues and cavities or natural hollows of the body. The drug helps boost the secretion and disposal of urine.

The root of the plant has been customarily used in snake and scorpion bites. A paste of the root can be prepared by mashing it on a stone with lemon juice and administered to the affected part. The patient should be taken to the doctor immediately.

Kantakari is also useful in treating several other diseases, such as: Heart disease, chest pain, specific kinds of fever, muscular pains, gonorrhoea, dysuria, expansion of the liver and spleen.

The herb is made to a paste and applied on swollen and painful joints to reduce the pain and swelling in arthritis.

The plant removes stone from the urinary bladder. In kidney stones Kantakari and Brihati should be taken with honey. The fumigation of kantakari is helpful in piles.

Its stem, flowers and fruits, being bitter and carminative, are used for relieving burning sensation in the feet.

The fruit works as an aphrodisiac in males.

Its seeds are helpful for treating irregular menstruation and dysmenorrheal in females.

Other usages:

- The yet unripe leaves and fruits are eaten as a vegetable after cooking.
• Its dried fruit is used in making cigarettes. The smoke from these cigarettes is held in the mouth cavity, to treat dental infections.

Action according to Ayurveda:
Kasa-shwasahara - Kantakari is useful in all types of cough and respiratory discomforts
Kanthya - improves voice and is useful in all disorders of voice
Hikka nigravana - alleviates hicough
Shothahara - Kantakari is useful in management of all edematous conditions
Sheeta prashamana - alleviates discomfort of long stay in cold
Angamarda prashamana - Kantakari has tranquilizer (pain killer) effect
Deepana - ignites digestive fire
Krimihara - Kantakari is useful in all infectious conditions
Kanduhara - alleviates itching
Garbha karini - useful in management of infertility
Meda hara - Kantakari removes unwanted fat from the body
Ashmari hara - useful in management of kidney stones

Bio energetics:
Rasa - Tikta, Katu
Guna - Laghu
Veerya - Ushna
Vipaka - Katu

Effect on Tridosha:
Because of its warm potency Kantakari pacifies the Vata and Kapha doshas i.e. it is useful in management of diseases having their origin in Kapha/Vata or both.

Useful part: whole plant, fruits

Dosages: powder 3-6 gm; decoction 40-80 ml. The juice is taken in doses ranging from 2ml to 8ml. The juice of the berries is used in curing sore throat.

Some useful combinations with Kantakari: Vyaghriharitaki; Kantakari ghruta; Vyaghari tail; Nidigdhikadi kwatha.

Caution: Kantkari should not be taken during pregnancy.

26. Triphala
Bibhitaki fruit is in the middle ring of this picture showing the Triphala ingredients. Haritaki is in the centre and Amla is on the outer ring.

A popular folk saying in India says, "No mother? Do not worry so long as you have Triphala."

The recipe for this traditional herbal supplement dates back thousands of years and is referenced in the traditional Indian texts the Charak and Sushrut Samhitas.

It consists of herbal fruit extracts of Beleric myrobalan - Bibhitaki or Behada, (Terminalia chebula) Chebulic myrobalan - Haritaki or Harada and (Indian Gooseberry) Emblic myrobalan Amalaki or Amala.

Triphala is considered a 'tridoshic rasayan', having balancing and rejuvenating effects on the three constitutional elements that govern human life: Vata which regulates the nervous system, Pitta which maintains metabolic processes, and Kapha which supports structural integrity.

Triphala is one of the most popular herbal remedies which 'cleanse' by promoting bowel movement. A reason is that one of the most common problems among many individuals is constipation and bowel irregularity. This can lead to poorer general digestion and liver function, less vitality and perhaps even less optimism and an overall poorer outlook and quality of life.

Triphala Churna Benefits:
Consider how tremendously valuable a formula would be that not only regulates bowel movement but at the same time does the following things:

- improves digestion
- is antioxidant rich
- improves circulation (cardiotonic and capillary strengthening flavonoids)
- potentiates adrenergic function (helps the body recover from stress)
- contains linoleic acid (an essential fatty acid) and phospholipids
- lowers blood pressure
- exerts a marked heart-protective and cardio-tonic effect
- reduces serum cholesterol
- improves liver function and is liver protective
- is anti-inflammatory (constituents include Vit. C and quercetin)
- is expectorant
- has anti-viral (HIV, AIDS, herpes, CMV) properties
- has anti-bacterial properties
- has anti-cancer properties
- has anti-allergy properties
Ayurvedic qualities of Triphala:
Taste: sweet, sour, pungent, astringent, bitter
Virya: ushna (warm)
Vipaka: sweet, sour, pungent
Guna: light and dry
Dosha: Tridoshic, meaning it balances all constitutions
Prabhava: Rasayan, which means it builds Ojas, innate strength.

27. Dasamoola

Aegle marmelos – Bilva,
Gmelina arborea – Kasmari,
Premna serratifolia – Agnimantha,
Stereospermum colais – Patala,
Oroxylum indicum – Shyonaka/Aralu,
Solanum surratense – Kantakari,
Solanum indicum – Brihati,
Desmodium gangeticum/Pseudarthria viscida – Salaparni,
Uraria picta – Prsniparni,
Tribulus terrestris – Gokshura.

These 10 roots has a rich content of sitosterols and glycosides, that normalize the status of the neuroendocrine system by regulating the function of such important hormones as: thyroid, pancreas, thymus, adrenal and reproductive system.

Dasamoola - is the most effective ayurvedic remedies for various thyroid dysfunctions, cystic formations of the ovaries, lymph disorders, skin diseases, staphylococcus lesions and viral hepatitis of A and B types. It prevents the development of gallstone disease, cancer and has a powerful antioxidant effect.
It is a rich tonic, that **stimulates the nervous system**. Dasamoola has the ability to act on a wide range of health problems, especially those caused by both Vata and Kapha.

An ancient text the Sarngadhara Samhita says that it **nourishes the body, stimulates the production of Ojas and gives progeny to the childless**. It is an excellent tonic for convalescence and general debility, **restoring health and vitality**.

So, this composition of ten roots is recommended for **cardiac disorders, anemia, respiratory diseases, asthma and breathing troubles, cough, bronchitis, fever, pneumonia, gastric irritation, urinary tract diseases, arthritis**. As well as **general weakness, neuropathy, nerve weakness**, as it boosts the immune system.

Effect on the doshas: pacify vitiated tridosha
Each of the herbs has its own prabhava.

**28. Morinda Citrifolia**

Cheese fruit or Noni (from Hawaiian)/ Nono (in Tahitian)/ Nhau/ Mengkudu (Indonesia and Malaysia)/ Pace (Javanese)/ Canary wood (Australia)/ Dog dumpling (Barbados)/ Indian Mulberry/ Nunaakai (Tamil Nadu, India)/ Ashyuka/ Ach/ Beach mulberry/ Hog Apple/ Meng Koedoe.

Morinda Citrifolia, commonly known as Great Morinda. Noni was mentioned in Ayurvedic texts well over 1000 years ago as Ashyuka, which means longevity, and was used as a balancing agent. It is a small evergreen tree in the coffee family of Rubiaceae. The tree grows vigorously from India to Malaysia, up through Fiji and eastern Polynesia. The original home of the plant is Polynesia, Micronesia and the Hawaiian Islands, where it is known as Noni, is now distributed throughout the tropics. It is known in Vietnam, Africa and the Caribbean - where it is called the "painkiller tree". The fruit of Morinda has been revered in Polynesia, China and elsewhere for 2000 years, for its extraordinary healing properties.

The plant bears flowers and fruits all year round. The fruit is a multiple fruit that has a pungent odor when ripening, and is hence also known as cheese fruit or even vomit fruit. It is oval in shape and reaches 4–7 centimetres. At first green, the fruit turns yellow then almost white as it ripens. It contains many seeds. It is sometimes called starvation fruit. Despite its strong smell and bitter taste, the fruit is nevertheless eaten as a famine food and, in some Pacific islands, even a staple food, either raw or cooked. Southeast Asians and Australian Aborigines consume the fruit raw with salt or cook it with curry. The seeds are edible when roasted.
Throughout Polynesia and India, the fruit and leaves are also a source of food. There is ample evidence to suggest that ancient Polynesians (as well as their descendants) used Noni for food; for cloth dye; and most importantly, for its medicinal properties. Medicinally, fruits are considered tonic, febrifuge, emmenagogue, anti-congestive, blood-purifying and more. Charred unripe fruits mixed with sea-salt relieve diseased gums. This prescription is identical in Polynesian and Ayurvedic systems. Leaves are used for infantile diarrhea and dysentery and to heal wounds, ulcers and the pain of gout. Ayurveda adds that noni is a kapha (water element) stabilizer and helps to remove excess pitta (fire element) from the body. There is an impressive list of body systems which "have all been effectively influenced by noni: circulatory, digestive, respiratory, integumentary (skin), endocrine, immune, nervous, skeletal etc. Research also, has shown that all parts of the Morinda Citrifolia plant, roots, seeds, flowers, leaves and fruit have a variety of positive health applications.

Morinda supports the immune system's natural ability to fight diseases and infection. Circulatory system, tissues, and cells: Morinda is one of the best antioxidants that help the body get rid of harmful free radicals. It also increases energy levels.

In Thailand it is used to relieve vomiting and nausea. In Fiji, it has been used to treat ringworm, hemorrhoids, and oral problems such as bad breath, hoarseness, and mouth ulcers. In the Cook Islands, noni juice has been used to treat urinary tract infections and abdominal swellings. The plant is also found throughout India where the fruit is claimed to be laxative and emmenagogue. Unfortunately, the noni fruit has an unpleasant taste and noxious smell and is therefore not eaten as nourishment except during times of famine.

The noni is especially attractive to weaver ants, which make nests out of the leaves of the tree. These ants protect the plant from some plant-parasitic insects. The smell of the fruit also attracts fruit bats, which aid in dispersing the seeds.

The main micronutrients of noni pulp powder include 9.8 mg of vitamin C per 1200 mg sample, as well as 0.048 mg niacin (vitamin B3), 0.02 mg iron and 32.0 mg potassium. Vitamin A, calcium and sodium are present in moderate amounts.

Noni fruit contains a number of phytochemicals, including lignans, oligo- and polysaccharides, flavonoids, iridoids, fatty acids, scopoletin, catechin, beta-sitosterol, damnacanthal, and alkaloids. These phytochemicals are not unique to noni, as they exist in various plants.

Some of the other active components of this fruit are:

- Anthraquinone: “Since 1961, we have known that various parts of the Morinda citrifolia tree contains several different varieties of bitter plant compounds known as anthraquinones. Plants containing anthraquinones have literally been used for millennia due to their medicinal properties. Most noted are significant antiseptic (antibacterial) effect to disease causing bacteria in the intestinal tract. This compound is especially toxic to the pathogens Shigela and Salmonella. Anthraquinones are also particularly effective against many forms of Staphylococcus, a major cause of many skin infections which sometimes infect the valves of the heart. Furthermore anthraquinones in noni prompt the digestive secretions of the stomach and small intestines, stimulate bile flow and promote the activity of the entire digestive process. However, it is the activity of one specific anthraquinone, damnacanthal which has been shown in vitro to actually reverse cancer cell proliferation at the gene level. The research has demonstrated that one isolated component found in noni fruit turned off the signal for tumour cells to proliferate. The study was reported in 1993 from a very reputable laboratory in Kao University in Yokohama, Japan.”
So, it controls infectious bacteria such as Staphylococcus Aureus, E. Coli & Salmonella.

- Scopoletin: *It was originally believed that one compound which had been isolated was responsible for all the many biological effects. The compound which has a chemical formula of C10H8O4 is known as Scopoletin. Both noni and scopoletin are known to reduce blood pressure, have anti-inflammatory activity, exhibit antibiotic activity, antifungal activity and possess antitumour effects. Yet when researchers at the University of Hawaii tried to purify and isolate scopoletin from the rest of the noni extract, much of its activity was lost. In fact, both the biological effects and the serotonin receptor binding effects of the crude noni extract was lost upon purification of this presumed active ingredient. This leaves us the conclusion that other substances in noni must be present in order to produce its biological effects.*

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- Damnacanthal: Inhibits growth of pre-cancerous cells.
- Terpene: Helps with cell rejuvenation, thus increasing nutrient-toxin exchange.
- Phytonutrients & Selenium: Provide powerful anti-oxidant protection against free radicals.
- Rich soluble and insoluble fiber: Soluble fiber helps cleanse the blood, decrease cholesterol, bind to fats and balances blood sugar levels. Insoluble fiber ("bulk") is important for colon health.
- Morinda is rich in amino acids, which are the building blocks for proteins and are important for most body functions. The essential amino acids are the ones our bodies cannot make and we therefore must get these from our diet because they maintain healthy skin, nerve cells, heart tissues, blood vessels, help balance mood and keep cell membranes working properly and efficiently by improving the nutrient-toxin exchange. Morinda contains 17 of the 20 known amino acids, including all 9 essential amino acids.
- Rich in essential fatty acids in Morinda juice are the important poly-unsaturated fats that we must get from our diet.

Traditional medicine uses Morinda against digestive problems such as diarrhea, intestinal worms, nausea, food poisoning; respiratory problems such as congestive cough, dry cough, tuberculosis, cholera, infant chest colds and sore throat; cardiovascular problems, hypertension; inflammatory conditions such as arthritis, abscesses, mastitis, gout and other inflammatory joint conditions. It is a noted analgesic or pain reliever.

One of the most common uses of noni seed oil which contains linoleic acid has been in the area of skin conditions, being utilized for wounds, ulcers, abscesses, ring worm, boils, cellulitis, swellings, scalp conditions and sores, anti-inflammation, acne reduction, moisture retention.

It has been used in the treatment of tumours and broken bones, jaundice and other forms of liver disease. It has been used to treat asthma and dysentery, hypercholesterolemia, menstrual cramps, gastric ulcers and diabetes.

Benefits from using Morinda Sitrifolia:

- Hypoglycemic and hepatoprotective activity
- Anti-oxidant, anti-inflammatory properties
- Accelerated wound healing
- Neuronal protective effect
- Improves dyslipidemia
- Protects brain from stress-induced impairment of cognitive function
- Immunostimulant
- Anticoagulant, inhibit the cyclooxygenase pathway to affect platelet aggregation.
- Potential anti-cancer
- Decreasing pain and joint destruction caused by arthritis
- Juices of over-ripe fruits are taken to regulate menstrual flow and ease urinary problems (Organic, Malaysia).

Noni has not been found to be harmful at any level, nor for any health condition. Natural products like Morinda citrifolia in its unprocessed complete form do not generally have adverse effects. The presence of a wide range of other naturally occurring substances which are present in some way regulates and modifies its effects.

Research shows that all parts of the Morinda Citrifolia: plant - roots, bark, stems, seeds, flowers, leaves and fruit - may have a variety of positive health implications, and are used in various medicinal preparations, healing protocols and treatment methods throughout the Pacific region.

**Morinda Citrifolia – nature's magic**

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About Morinda:

A plant known in Sanskrit as "Achuka"or Morinda citrifolia has a rich history in India where it has been used for tens of centuries in the system of medicine known as ayurveda. This holistic medical tradition was established in the north western part of India by a people called arynes who were reputed to be a rather cosmic civilization. Morinda citrifolia was especially esteemed by the ancient aryan physicians because it protected the skin from becoming dry and cracked from the sun.

The fruit of the Achuka was attributed special properties by ancient physicians.

I first investigated what was known about the compounds in the noni fruit. Not surprisingly I found that several important active constituents were already identified which had beneficial effects in human physiology. Among the most intriguing were the carotenoids, bioflavonoids and anthraquinones as well as several other unknown substances which according to their chemical structures appeared to be accessory activating factors.

With regard to Morinda citrifolia, an interesting thing started to happen the more my research progressed. It seemed that the list of ailments for which noni was used medically just grew and grew longer than almost any other medicinal plant that I have ever encountered. I was initially overwhelmed at how many medical indications this single plant has had in the Pacific Islands and south east Asian literature.

A few of the medicinal uses are for: digestive problems such as diarrhea, intestinal worms, nausea, food poisoning; respiratory problems such as congestive cough, dry cough, tuberculosis, cholera, infant chest colds and sore throat; cardiovascular problems, hypertension; inflammatory conditions such as arthritis, abscesses, mastitis, gout and other inflammatory joint conditions. It is a noted analgesic or pain reliever.
One of the most common uses of noni has been in the area of skin conditions, being utilized for wounds, ulcers, abscesses, ring worm, boils, cellulitis, swellings, scalp conditions and sores. It has been used in the treatment of tumours and broken bones, jaundice and other forms of liver disease. It has been used to treat asthma and dysentery, hypercholesterolemia, menstrual cramps, gastric ulcers and diabetes.

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About Morinda:

Ancient manuscripts call the different glands in the body seals, and by a seal, we mean something which opens and closes. Ancient medical literature states that the glands actually operate according to frequency, a term which is becoming very popular these days in nuclear and quantum physics. The frequency of the glands was known thousands of years ago, but we have forgotten much of this information. In ancient terms, the pineal gland was called the sixth seal or sixth gland of the body. We have recently discovered that it stimulates two major hormones called serotonin and melatonin. The pineal gland controls the five other glands below it which are the thyroid which produces thyroxine to energize our cells, the thymus which protects you against infections and cancer, the pancreas which is involved with blood sugar and secreting the hormone insulin, the adrenal gland which responds every time you are under stress; and the first gland is the male and female sex organs and their hormones. Therefore restoring the sixth gland, the pineal gland, will have an impact on all those other glands and their functions in the body. When the pineal gland is at its peak performance, it turns a golden colour and emits a black juice as well as a golden oil. That black juice would be the melanin colour of the organs and every other area of the body which has a pigment.

It happens that Noni juice mimics the secretion coming from the pineal gland, and in fact acts as a precursor to it, building it up and allowing it to function fully. Noni juice has a black colour, very similar to the melanin that gives colour or pigment to each one of our organs. Every place our body contains this pigment will be affected by Noni juice.

The back of the eye has a black area called the macula which is pigmented with melanin. That is the area the light hits when your eye opens. Many people have difficulty with blindness because they no longer make that beautiful colour in that spot. We have noted the Noni juice makes the macula generate more pigment and the cells begin to return to normal, and the blindness reverses itself.

In the brain, that black stain is found in an area of the mid-brain called the substantia nigra, nigra standing for black. Diseases related to that area occur when it no longer receives pigment and begins to deteriorate. Diseases in this category are multiple sclerosis and Parkinson’s disease. Appropriate function of the pineal gland is important in restoring those cells, and we are seeing patients reversing some of their neurological problems because the Noni juice is stimulating the production of chemicals essential to those areas of the brain.

The pancreas is also affected by Noni juice: the blood sugar and blood pressure begin to normalize. The pineal gland affects the different organs all the way down to the first glands, the male and female sex organs, and people are noticing for example that their prostate glands are beginning to shrink down to normal size once they have been on the Noni juice for a short period of time. Women who have problems with their uterus or with fibroids etc. are noticing that the fibroids are beginning to disappear, that their
menstruation is beginning to normalize, they have less cramps and their bleeding problems become more in balance.

29. Lucerne

Medicago sativa/ Alfalfa/ Lucerne/ Willayati ghas/ Lasunghas/ Guinea grass/ Buffalo herb/ Chilean Clover

The common name of the herb Alfalfa is Lucerne of the pea family and is called Medicago sativa by the botanical name. It is a flowering plant in the pea family Fabaceae cultivated as an important forage crop. In the UK, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand, it is also known as lucerne, and as lucerne grass in south Asia. In Hindi, it is known as chara, and in Gujarati as rajka or gadab. Known botanically as Medicago sativa, alfalfa's common name is a Spanish adulteration of the Arabic name, al-fac-facah. It resembles clover, with clusters of small purple flowers.
The leguminous plant has entered India through northwest viz. Baluchistan, Afghanistan, Kashmir and other countries approached from northwest. This herb is extensively grown in different parts of India including Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu, southern India.

Alfalfa has been used in herbal medicine for over 1,500 years. In early Chinese medicine physicians used young alfalfa leaves to treat disorders related to the digestive tract and the kidneys. They used it to stimulate appetite and treat digestive troubles particularly ulcers. Chinese herbalists also recognize alfalfa's nutritional potential and recommend alfalfa for conditions like night blindness.

Vitamins like vitamin A, C and E along with zinc, is proved to dissolve the stones in the kidney. These vitamins and minerals can be found in alfalfa sprouts and alfalfa powder. The leaves are rich in vitamin K, which is used medicinally to encourage the clotting of blood and vitamin K (as K2) has been found to help prevent bone loss which is coupled to estrogen deficiency and also helps to increase the formation of new bone.

The practitioners of alternative treatment use Alfalfa for its cooling, sweet, and astringent properties that cleanse toxins from tissues. Moreover this herb is diuretic, controls bleeding and lowers cholesterol levels.
In Ayurvedic medicine, physicians used the leaves for treating poor digestion. They made a cooling poultice from the seeds to treat boils. As this wonderful herb is rich in all the minerals, it helps in strengthening and formation of bones. A tea made of this herb is a wonderful medicine for treating arthritis.

In Ayurveda, alfalfa is considered a mild tonic good for purifying the blood. Alfalfa is considered to have alterative, diuretic, antipyretic and hemostatic actions. In Ayurveda,
alfalfa is usually prepared as an infusion and is considered especially good for Pitta constitutions. Alfalfa is often combined with dandelion, nettles and horsetail.

Alfalfa had been used traditionally for treating infections resulting from surgical incisions, bed sores and inner ear problems.

Alfalfa is mostly used for curing kidneys, anemia, peptic ulcers, fatigue, pituitary problems, bowel & urinary problems, and building general health. It can also be used for treating alcohol and narcotic addiction and against retaining water in the body. Alfalfa is a good diuretic and also a good laxative. It also works well for urinary tract infections, kidney, bladder and prostrate disorders.

Alfalfa is also considered a rich source of nutrients like vitamins and minerals. It is often used to treat nutritional deficiencies and its name means "father of all food".

Alfalfa is high in protein (up to 50% protein), calcium, vitamins in the group B, vitamins C, E and K. Also it has good quantity of beta carotene, chlorophyll and octacosanol. Other ingredients are: saponins, sterols, flavonoids, coumarins, alkaloids, acids, vitamins (A, B1, B6, B12, C, D, E, K, niacin, pantothenic acid, biotin, folic acid), amino acids, sugars, minerals (Ca, K, P, Mg, Fe, Zn, Cu), trace elements and other nutrients. The plant is so rich in Calcium that the ashes of its leaves are almost 99% pure Calcium.

The plant is grown commercially as a source of chlorophyll and carotene, both of which have proven health benefits. The leaves also contain the anti-oxidant tricin. The root is febrifuge and is also prescribed in cases of highly coloured urine. Extracts of the plant are antibacterial. The plant is a kidney tonic, prostatic tonic, reproductive tonic, musculoskeletal tonic, glandular tonic and so forth. It also contains plenty of fiber with anticholesterolemic properties.

Alfalfa is also used in alternative herbal treatments to treat ailments and problems such as menopause discomfort, cancer fighting and lowering cholesterol.

Presence of Phytoestrogens in alfalfa:

One of the most promising new uses for Medicago appears to be in the treatment of endocrine imbalance. Investigators were able to identify several hormonally active compounds in Medicago, the most important group of these being the phytoestrogens. These compounds are not true estrogens, yet they possess molecular structures similar enough to estrogen to bind to estradiol receptors. Medicago contains three major phytoestrogens: coumestrol, genistein and formonetin; and two less important ones, diadzein and biochanin Most phytoestrogens are isoflavones, while coumestrol is a coumarin derivative. Although all lack a true steroid structure, they do have at least one phenol ring and free hydroxyl groups in positions 7 and 12. Coumestrol is the most hormonally active of the group, with a relative estrogenic activity 5% that of estradiol. This is followed by genistein with 1% and formonetin with 0.1% activity. The relative weakness of their estrogenic action means that these compounds will have an "alterative" or "balancing" effect. Phytoestrogens may be used therapeutically in both hypoestrogenism and hyperestrogenism states. It is precisely this quality that makes them so useful therapeutically, especially in a naturopathic setting.

In conditions of hypoestrogenism the plant estrogens will bind directly to estrogen receptors and provide a mild estrogenic effect. This is enhanced by the tendency of the phytoestrogens to concentrate in reproductive tissues, in preference to the serum...
proteins.

In conditions of hyperestrogenism the relatively weak-acting phytoestrogens will compete for binding sites, thus reducing the number of receptors available to the stronger endogenous estrogens and reducing net estrogenic stimulation. This is most useful in estrogen excess conditions such as premenstrual syndrome, fibrocystic breasts, uterine leiomyomas, and estrogen-responsive cancers of the breast and uterus.

Use of alfalfa in managing cholesterol:

All parts of the plant have been used in one or more studies, and in each study the component tested, whether it be the seeds, the roots or the meal, has demonstrated anticholesterolemic and anti-atherogenic activity. Alfalfa meal appears to lower total cholesterol, triglycerides, low-density lipoproteins, (LDL) and very low-density lipoproteins (VLDL) while not significantly lowering the desirable HDL sub fractions.

The latest and greatest discovery of Alfalfa is the benefits that it might provide for lowering cholesterol because there are certain agents in Alfalfa that stick to cholesterol which keeps it from remaining in the blood stream. Further, it may also have a very strong relationship with lowering blood sugar levels. Studies done at University of California at Davis found that alfalfa extracts with a lot of manganese definitely improved the condition of a diabetic who failed to respond to insulin.

Immunity system boost with alfalfa:

It has anti bacterial, anti tumoral properties. The saponin in alfalfa has shown anti fungal properties. The aqueous extracts are antibacterial against gram-negative bacteria.

In addition to these properties, Alfalfa is used in treating drug and alcohol dependency and since it alkalizes the body, it helps with detoxification. As the herb contains chlorophyll, alfalfa helps to bind carcinogens in the colon to speed elimination and is said to be effective in eliminating bad breath. The studies show that an extract of alfalfa increased the production of white blood cells, including granulocytes, leukocytes and T cells which are the first line of defense against infection. Alfalfa is also great for reducing fevers.

The seeds of the herb are also used as a folk remedy for treating asthma or other breathing conditions.

Alfalfa as a rejuvenator:

People have used alfalfa for centuries worldwide for overall support and rejuvenation. Because of its deep root system, alfalfa is a rich source of the minerals calcium, magnesium, phosphorous, iron, potassium, and trace minerals. Specifically, it is one of the best sources for protein and is very high in chlorophyll, carotene, the vitamins A, D, E, B-6, K, and several digestive enzymes. This may be why it is said to help reconstitute bone and when fresh, is beneficial for rickets. Research suggests that it may inactivate dietary chemical carcinogens in the liver and small intestine before they have a chance to do the body any harm. It is commonly used for bladder infections. Alfalfa is used as an appetite stimulant, a vitality augmenter (tonic), a digestive stimulant, for insomnia, and to relax the nervous system.

Alfalfa juice is combined with equal quantities of lettuce and carrot juice. This taken daily as it helps in the promotion of hair growth. This is the most amazing factor of this
herb as it works wonders in treating baldness. These juices are taken in combination because it is rich in certain elements that helps in proper hair growth and prevents the loss of hair as well.

Lucerna in cuisine:

When it comes to Alfalfa it is something that many people enjoy in their cuisine. The sprouts of Alfalfa are eaten in salads and sandwiches, tender shoots are eaten in some places as a leaf vegetable and the parts of mature plant are consumed though it is rare. Many people claim that eating Alfalfa is a big part of eating healthy. Besides wheat grass and algae, Alfalfa has the most nutritional value. It is high in fiber, vitamins, minerals, and has all of the required digestive enzymes.

It is warned by avid Alfalfa lovers that you likely will not like the way that it tastes in your mouth, it may feel like it is burning the tip of your tongue and you actually might just completely dislike it however, they urge you to not give up because it is an acquired taste and you will begin to like it. The best news is that soon after eating it regularly you will find that your appetite for heavier foods will diminish.

Alfalfa makes a great tea because when the Alfalfa leaves steep in the hot water it is a source of nitrogen. It also contains natural fluoride and prevents tooth decay.

Parts used: whole plant excluding root.
In the various healing disciplines, mainly the sprouts, stems, dried leaves and seeds are used for different purposes. And, of course, the fresh sprouts are usually eaten raw.

Pharmacological action: alterative, diuretic, antipyretic, haemostatic. The plant is anti scorbutic, aperient’s, ebolic, and haemostatic, nutritive, stimulant and tonic. The expressed juice is emetic and is also anodyne in the treatment of gravel. Tonic, anti fungal, laxative, detoxifier, anti-inflammatory, febrifuge, hepatoprotective, digestive, nutritive.

Indications: The plant is taken internally for debility in convalescence or anaemia, hemorrhage, menopausal complaints, premenstrual tension, fibroids, vitamin or mineral deficiency,
Also:
* It heals whooping cough
* Prevents the occurrence of stroke
* Lowers the levels of cholesterol in the blood
* Cleanses the liver, bowel and the blood
* Nourishes the skeletal, urinary, digestive and glandular system
* Helps in treating arthritis
* Treats auto-immune disorders
*Cures kidney disorders and relieves swelling and fluid retention

Preparations: powder (250 mg to 1 gram), decoction, infusion

«Combines well with dandelion, horsetail, nettles and parsley. Its action is cleansing and detoxifying. Drying effect may aggravate Vata. Mild blood purifier and good general beverage for Pitta and, to a lesser degree, Kapha».

From “The Yoga of Herbs,” by Dr. David Frawley and Dr. Vasant Lad

Doshas: Pitta-, Kapha-, Vatta+
Good for: plasma and blood tissues, circulatory and urinary systems

Precautions: high Vata

What are the side effects of Alfalfa:
Any herbal product must be taken in moderation to avoid adverse reactions. In some cases, the alfalfa herb when taken in excessive amounts, is found to break the red blood cells that can be extremely dangerous.

Research has also stated that diet rich in Canavanine, which is an amino acid present in this herb can trigger the occurrence of lupus. However, this compound is found in sprouts and seeds of alfalfa but is not present in the mature leaves.

Thus, tea made from this herb and capsules made from the leaves does not contain this substance. It is however, told that this herb must not be consumed during pregnancy because of the substance canavanine. It is highly recommended not to take alfalfa supplements and avoid regular consumption especially during pregnancy.

Dose: dried herb: 5-10gms

30. Sarpgandha

Rauwolfia Serpentina/ Snake Root/ Serpentine Root/ Indian Snake Root

Rauwolfia serpentina, or 'snakeroot' or 'sarpagandha' is a species of flowering plant in the family Apocynaceae. An erect, evergreen perennating undershrub. It is found in tropical Himalayas, Sikkim, North Bihar, Assam and Deccan Peninsula.

Rauwolfia serpentina is also called Sarpgandha, the term sarpgandha means something that has the smell (gandha) of a snake (sarpa). It has been used for millennia as an antidote against bites of venomous reptiles.

It is one of the 50 fundamental herbs used in traditional Chinese medicine, where it has the name shègēn mù .

Rauwolfia serpentina contains a number of bioactive chemicals, including yohimbine, reserpine, ajmaline, deserpidine, rescinnamine, serpentinine.

The pharmacological activity of Rauwolfia is due to the presence of several alkaloids of which reserpine is the most important, it is a powerful sedative substance, hence
Rauwolfia has been employed for centuries for the relief of various central nervous system disorders, both psychic and motor, including anxiety states, excitement, manic behavior associated with psychosis, schizophrenia, insanity, insomnia and epilepsy. It is also used as a fever relieving medicine.

Extracts of the roots are valued for the treatment of intestinal disorders, particularly diarrhea and dysentery and other painful affections of the intestinal canal. It is also used as an anthelmintic.

The extract of the plant has also been used by Alexander the Great in India. He administered this plant to cure his general Ptolemy of a poisoned arrow. It was reported that Mahatma Gandhi took it as a tranquilizer during his lifetime. A compound which it contains called reserpine, is used to treat high blood pressure and mental disorders including schizophrenia, and was particularly popular for that purpose in the West from 1954 to 1957.

Sarpagandhi (Rauwolfia serpentina) is an Ayurvedic herb, effective in reducing high blood pressure. According to Ayurveda it is the best among all anti-hypertensive drugs.

This plant is used medicinally both in the Modern Western Medical system and also in Ayurveda, unani and folk medicine. It helps to reduce blood pressure, depresses activity of central nervous system and acts as a hypnotic. Snakeroot depletes catecholamines and serotonin from nerves in central nervous system.

An extract from sarpagandhi root, named reserpine is used in the mental clinics as an alternative to electric shock treatment.

Rauwolfia health benefits:

- Insomnia – It is an important medicine in treatment of insomnia as it has sedative properties. Roots powder measuring 0.6 gm to 1.25 gm should taken before going to bed.
- Insanity – The herb is highly beneficial in treatment of insanity. Roots powder measuring 1 gm should be mixed in goat’s milk and taken before going to bed. Before taking the powder, one must ensure to have blood pressure examined. Its consumption is not suitable for people with low blood pressure.
- Hysteria – To counter hysteria, one should take 1 gm powder with milk thrice a day. Treatment should be continued till complete cure.
- High blood pressure – ½ teaspoon of the powder should be taken each day is effective in relieving hypertension. To decrease the blood pressure, it is also administered with rose, arjuna and cardamom.
- Nerves relaxation – It is mixed with licorice, gotu kola, brahmi and jatamamsi to calm down the nerves.
- Tranquilizer – It acts as a an active tranquilizer. Hence, it provides nourishment to nerves and rejuvenates the system.
- Circulatory system – It improves the circulatory system and dilates the blood vessel and allows easy flow of blood.
- Dysmenorrhea – It provides relief from dysmenorrhea and relieves spasms and intestinal inflammations.
- Digestive system: root is a valuable remedy for dysentery and painful affections of bowel.
- Reproductive system: decoction of root is applied to increase uterine contractions and promote expulsion of fetus.
- Eyes: juice of leaves is instilled in eyes as a remedy for the opacities of cornea.
Indications: dysentery, fevers, high blood pressure, hypochondria, insanity, insect stings, and insomnia, painful bowel disorders.

Action: sedative, depressant, febrifuge, and tonic

Properties according to Ayurveda:

Rasa: tikta.
Guna: ruksha
Virya: usna
Vipaka: katu
Karma: nidrajanan

Cautions before taking Rauwolfia:
- Pregnant women and nursing mothers should avoid taking the herb.
- It should also not be consumed by asthma and depression patients.
- This herb is not suitable medicine for ulcers and kidney pains.

Parts used: root

Preparations: decoction, powder, pills

Dose: 1-2 Gms

31. Kanchnar

Bauhinia variegata or purpuria/ Kanchnar (Hindi,Punjabi,Urdu)/ Kanchan (Bengali)/ Raktakanchanara, Kovidara (Sanscrit names)/ Orchid tree/ Camel’s Foot Tree/ Mountain ebony.

Bauhinia variegata is a species of flowering plant in the family Fabaceae, native to southeastern Asia, from southern China west to Pakistan and India. A large moderate sized deciduous tree grows up to 10 meters in height. Bauhinia variegata (Leguminosae) commonly known as Kachnar, is widely used in Ayurveda as tonic to the liver.
It’s an astringent tonic contains tannic acid useful in scrofula (lymph nodes of the neck), tumors, Glandular enlargement, prostatic hypertrophy, thyroid enlargement, skin diseases, ulcers, leprosy, diarrhea and dysentery. Bauhinia is also used in malaria. In inflammatory skin disorders with oozing this is a very effective formula. When the toxins are obstructing the deeper fat tissues and the Lipid layer then Kanchnar is the appropriate formula.

A safe and effective herb known for its anti inflammatory, healing and laxative properties which makes it a natural choice against conditions like fistula in ano, hemorrhoids, fissures etc.

In ayurvedic texts it is known for its affinity towards lymphatic system as it is found to be useful in infective and inflammatory conditions of lymph glands and due to its preventive action in tuberculosis affecting the lymph nodes of the neck (Scrofula). The emulsion of Kanchanara bark with rice water and honey with ginger juice in scrofulous enlargement of the glands of the neck and the same thing is applied externally also.

It is a specific herb for hypo/hyper thyroid. It has a balancing activity on the thyroxin production; increasing any deficient production and decreasing any excess. It also clears swellings in the neck and goitre. It is a specific herb for swollen lymph nodes, cervical adenitis, scrophularia or swollen glands in general. It effectively flushes the lymphatic system of toxins, sluggishness and accumulated wastes. Also may be beneficial where the sinuses are congested because of the sluggish lymphatic system. It is a powerful decongestant.

Oral administration of extract of Bauhinia variegata (250 mg/kg) effectively suppressed liver tumor and decreased the elevated levels of liver enzymes. Hence, B. variegata appears to be a promising hepatoprotective agent.

Extract of Bauhinia Variegata was not only effective against liver tumors but also found to be cytotoxic against human epithelial larynx cancer and human breast cancer cells. The antitumour activity of the extract of Bauhinia variegata (EBV) has also been evaluated against Dalton's ascitic lymphoma (DAL). EBV treatment was found to enhance peritoneal cell counts and was able to reverse the changes in the hematological parameters, protein and PCV consequent to tumor inoculation. A glycoside found in it (O-beta-galactopyranoside) showed excellent anti-inflammatory activity.

Ayurveda recommends gargle with Kanchanara bark for sore throat and excessive salivation.

The decoction from the flowering buds is useful for cough, bleeding piles, worms, diarrhea, haematuria and menorrhagia. It is a fantastic remedy for treating endometriosis - the Kanchnar astringes the bleeding whilst the other ingredients scrape and eliminate the adhesions.

Dried buds of Kanchanara with honey is good for diarrhoea and dysentery, dyspepsia, flatulence and this is the only fat reducing recipe mentioned in classical Ayurvedic texts. When there are signs of excess weight with a sluggish lymphatic system this is appropriate

Ayurveda recommends the Kanchanara flowers with honey as laxative. Kanchanara bark with milk is known for its effect on glandular swellings, ulcers, skin diseases, gonorrhoea and syphilis and intermittent fever.

Properties:
Plant pacifies vitiated kapha, diarrhea, skin diseases, rectal prolapse, diabetes, inflammations, worms, tumors, hemorrhoids, menorrhagia hemoptysis and cervical lymphadoinopathy.

Ayurvedic properties:
Rasa - Kashaya, Tikta;
Guna - Rooksha, Laghu;
Virya - Ushna, Sita;
Vipaka - Katu

Parts used: Bark, roots, buds, gum, leaves, seeds and flowers.

32. Gambhari

Gamhar is a beautiful fast growing deciduous tree, it belongs to Verbena family and features a light gray bark and reddish flowers that give way to bitter-sweet fruits. The tree grows throughout greater part of India at altitudes up to 1500 meters. It also occurs naturally in Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, and in southern provinces of China, and has been planted extensively in Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Malaysia, and on experimental basis in other countries as well.

The tree attains moderate to large height up to 30 m. Flowering takes place during February to April when the tree is more or less leafless whereas fruiting starts from May onwards up to June.

Flowers are sweet, cooling, bitter, acrid and astringent. They are useful in leprosy and blood diseases. The fruits are sweet in taste, sweet in the post digestive effect and have cold potency. The fruit alleviates the Pitta dosha. It possesses heavy and oily attributes. (Raja Nighantu)

The rots of gambhari are bitter, astringent and sweet in taste, pungent in the post digestive effect and have hot potency and heavy attribute. The roots alleviate Vata and Kapha doshas.
The roots, fruits, and the leaves of gambhari have great medicinal value. Externally, the paste of the leaves is applied on the forehead to alleviate the headache, especially in fever. You can make fresh leaf extract may be applied to the body as a massage oil to relieve fevers.

The roots, leaves, and fruits of Gmelina arborea have been used as ingredients in herbal medicine to treat pain and inflammation. Alkaloids and benzoic acid are found in the root, while the leaves contain luteolin. The fruits have tartaric acid, which is an antioxidant commonly found in wine.

Luteolin is also an antioxidant that is classified as a flavonoid, which is a group of plant molecules that give color to plants. Flavonoids with antioxidant properties protect cells from the damaging effects of reactive oxygen molecules, commonly known as free radicals. Usually, flavonoids increase the effectiveness of other antioxidants, such as vitamin C. Flavonoids also reduce inflammation by interacting with the cells of the immune system.

Gambhari is one of the herbs mentioned in all ancient scriptures of Ayurveda, as one of the member of brhat pancamulas. Acarya Vagbhata has cited gambhari, one of the members from the group of dasamulas, as a pacifier of Vata dosha. The great sage Charaka has categorized gambhari as sothahara – relieves edema, virecanopaga – adjunct to purgation and its fruit as dahaprasamana – relieves burning sensation of the skin.

In Ayurvedic texts, gambhari has numerous synonyms like kasmari – a beautiful tree, sriparni - has beautiful leaves, madhuparnika - has leaves with sweetish taste, pita rohini – has yellow flowers etc.

In the Ayurveda system, several parts of the Gmelina arborea are taken internally to treat ailments:

The fruits are recommended in raktapitta, excessive thirst, dysuria, sexual debility in males and habitual abortion. The fruits are also beneficial as anabolic in tuberculosis to hasten the healing of cavitation in the lungs. Whereas, the roots alleviate the cough. As the fruit is cooling, it effectively pacifies the Pitta dosha and rakta dhatu (blood).

The ripened fruit is valuable in heart diseases of Vata imbalance. The cold infusion of tea prepared from gambhari fruits is extremely beneficial, mixed with honey and wugar, in fever of Pitta origin. The decoction of gambhari, sariva and guduchi roots is an effective medicament for fever of Vata type. Urdhva raktapitta, vomiting and burning sensation of the body. For tuberculosis, the fruits are consumed to hasten the healing of scar tissue in the lungs, while coughing is treated with the roots.

The roots are described in the Ayurvedic texts as a mild laxative which treats flatulence and increases appetite, but the effectiveness isn’t established scientifically. Additionally, the roots are cited as a reliever of menstrual irregularities and a method to increase lactation. The roots are sweet in taste and astringent, which means the chemicals within the root cause tissues to constrict. This causes a dry or puckered feeling in the mouth when consumed.

The roots are salutary in piles, being mild laxative. The cold infusion of candana, ustra, gambhari works well with sugar, to alleviate the thirst. Gambhari roots are also helpful in ascites due to Vata, as adjunct.

For hyperacidity, the gambhari leaves, apamarga roots and the bark-skin of salmali are mashed with cow’s milk and are given orally. The leaves juice, milk and sugar are recommended in inflammatory conditions of urinary bladder and dysuria. In dysuria, the decoction of its roots is also benevolent.
The plant is recommended in combination with other drugs for the treatment of snakebite and scorpion sting. In snake bite a decoction of the root and bark is given internally.

Ayurvedic properties:

Gunna– guru 
Rasa– madhur, tickta and kashaya 
Virya– ushan 

Indication:

- It is vata, pitta and kapha suppressant;  
- cools up the body;  
- suppresses pain and inflammation;  
- improves digestion and absorption in the body;  
- supports heart for its normal functioning;  
- also helps in maintaining the normal blood pressure level;  
- improves brain functioning;  
- prevents hemorrhages;  
- provides strength to the body;  
- it is diuretic in nature;  
- increasers milk secretion in the lactating mothers;  
- it is a good aphrodisiac agent;  
- helps in normalizing the abnormally raised temperature;  

Classical Ayurvedic Preparations with Gambhari: Sriparnyadi kvatha, Sriparni taila, Brhatpancamula kvatha, Dasmularista (Dasamoola) etc.

Paste - it is used in case of head aches, burns, burning sensations and pains.

Powder – it is being used in mental imbalance, pains, indigestion, tuberculosis, weakness, urine related disorders, infections, general body weakness, impotence, decreased sperm count, lactating mothers, increasing breast size.

Juice – it is being used in urine related problems and blood impurity.

Parts used: the drupes, leaves, flower, roots and bark are used in medicine.

No adverse effect was reported on continuous use of this plant. It has no toxic effect on human body when consumed in limited dosage.

33. Salaparni
Salaparni – The name originated due to its similarity to the leaves of leaves of sala tree (shorea robusta). It belongs to family Fabaceae. Saliparni has been used as a potent ayurvedic drug from the period of Samhitas. The drug has been mentioned in various ayurvedic texts like Carka Samhita, susruta samhita, ashtanga hridaya, ashtanga samgraha etc; various preparations which contain Saliparni are mentioned in these samhitas.

Saliparni is a common plant found in almost all districts of southern parts of India. It is mainly seen in areas from southwards of the river Godavari. It is very common in Kerala, where it is found in areas of sea level to up to that of 3.000 feet in the hills.

There exists a controversy and dilemma in identifying the two classical drugs Saliparni and Prisniparni. In the northern parts of India Saliparni is identified as Desmodium gangeticum whereas in the southern belt which includes states like Kerala it is identified as Pseudarthria viscida. And moreover Desmodium gangeticum is used as Prisniparni here. Many commentators of ayurveda materia medica also identify Saliparni as Desmodium gangeticum. This has caused confusion in the meanings of Sanskrit words Saliparni and Prisniparni.

Salaparni is sweet and bitter in taste, sweet in the post digestive effect and has hot potency. The roots have astringent taste but no special odour. It alleviates all the three doshas. It possesses heavy and oily attributes.

Dasamularista is one of the widely used preparation of salaparni in vata diseases. It has antipyretic, aphrodisiac and rejuvenative properties and is used in the diseases like fever, bronchial asthma, hemorrhoids, edema, diabetes mellitus, diarrhea and tuberculosis. The decoction of dasamula is aslo used in rheumatism, asthma and heart diseases.

The whole plant of salaparni is used for medicinal purpose. The herb is seldom used externally. Internally it is useful in vast range of diseases.

- The decoction works well, with asafetida and salt, in paralysis.
- In asthma and cough, the decoction of dasamula is given along with the powder of anescara errand roots.
- The decoction of laghu pancamula (five minor roots) i.e. roots of Salaparni, (prsniparni), Kantakari, Brhati and Goksura, is benevolent in the treatment of urinary calculi (stones) and dysuria.
• In hysteria, the decoction of dasamula is given along with ghee, with great benefit.
• It is a valuable panacea from heart diseases and blood disorders. In heart diseases, associated with palpitations, Salaparni ksirapaka – medicated milk preparation of the herb, is extremely beneficial.
• Salaparni is a keen stimulant for digestive system and is used in digestive ailments like anorexia, flatulence, diarrhea, vomiting and piles.
• As it effectively arrests the bleeding and alleviates edema. It is rewarding in sexual debility and premature ejaculation.
• Salaparni is salutary in general debility as a general tonic and in tuberculosis.
• In tuberculosis, especially with tissue and works as mucolytic also as well.
• It is salubrious as a pain-killer in general body ache.
• It also works well as anti-toxin in poisoning; in bites like that of scorpion bites.
• The herb is widely used in vata disorders and is the best nervine. The herb is useful in fever, especially in typhoid.

Ayurvedic properties:

Rasa - Madhura, Tikta
Guna - Guru, Snigdha
Veerya - Usna
Vipaka – Madhura

Dosa karmata - Saliparni helps in controlling all the three doshas equally. Thus it is a tridosha samaka dravya.

Action on different systems:

It cures nervous system, digestive system, rheumatic, cardiovascular system, reproductive system, respiratory system, urinary system.

Dose: the average dosage of Saliparni decoction is 50-100 ml

Formulation:

The drug is used as an ingredient of a number of official preparations of classical remedies such as Agastya haritaki rasayana, Brahma rasayana, Dasamula kwatha churna, Vidaryadi churna kwatha, Eladi gritha, Dasamula gritha, Dasamula satpalaka, Dadhika grtha, Sudarshana churna, Dhanvantara ghrita, Narayana taila, Madhuyastiyadi taila, Sahaccaradi taila, Manasamitra taila, Salaparnyadi kwatha, Laghu pancamula kwatha, Dasamularishta.

34. Karela
It is a tropical and subtropical vine of the family Cucurbitaceae, widely grown in Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean for its edible fruit, which is among the most bitter of all fruits. Bitter melon is generally consumed cooked in the green or early yellowing stage. The young shoots and leaves of the bitter melon may also be eaten as greens.

Bitter melon has been used in various Asian and African traditional medicine systems for a long time. Karela or bitter gourd is extensively grown plant in Indian subcontinent. In the age old medicinal science, Ayurveda, the fruit of bitter melon is considered as emetic, purgative, anti-bilious, tonic, stomachic, stimulant and alternative. It has been established to be tremendously brilliant in treating Diabetes mellitus.

Bitter melon is traditionally regarded in Asia as useful for preventing and treating malaria. Tea from its leaves is used for this purpose also in Panama and Colombia. In Guyana, bitter melons are boiled and stir-fried with garlic and onions. This popular side dish known as corilla is served to prevent malaria. Laboratory studies have confirmed that species related to bitter melon have anti-malarial activity, though human studies have not yet been published.

Bitter melon or karela is rich in iron (Fe) content and has two times the beta carotene of broccoli, two times the calcium (Ca) of spinach, two times the potassium (K) of bananas, and possesses vitamins C (ascorbic acid) and B1 (thiamine) to B3, phosphorus (P) and outstanding dietary fiber. At least thirty two energetic constituents have been recognized in bitter melon or karela or bitter gourd so far, jointly with beta-sitosterol-d-glucoside, citrulline, GABA, lutein, lycopene and zeaxanthin.

Bitter melon is thought to be outstanding for the liver related disorders and has been established by western scientists to hold insulin, perform as an anti-tumor agent, and restrain HIV-1 infection.

Laboratory tests suggest that compounds in bitter melon might be effective for treating HIV infection. As most compounds isolated from bitter melon that impact HIV have either been proteins or lectins, neither of which are well-absorbed, it is unlikely that oral intake of bitter melon will slow HIV in infected people. It is possible oral ingestion of bitter melon could offset negative effects of anti-HIV drugs, if a test tube study can be shown to be applicable to people.
Karela is extremely beneficial in treating **Diabetes mellitus**. Bitter melon also contains a lectin that has **insulin-like activity** due to its non-protein-specific linking together to insulin receptors. This lectin lowers blood glucose concentrations by acting on peripheral tissues and, similar to insulin's effects in the brain, suppressing appetite. This lectin is likely a major contributor to the hypoglycemic effect that develops after eating bitter melon.

Karela or commonly known as bitter gourd contains a polypeptide that is very similar to bovine insulin. This polypeptide is known as Gurmarin. This polypeptide has been found in experimental studies to attain a supportive sugar adaptable consequence by suppressing the neural retort to sweet taste stimuli. Karela or the bitter gourd fruit is often used in the Indian subcontinent as a diet and is well-known as a folk medicine for the most speared life style disorder commonly known as diabetes mellitus.

Also it helps in **lowering blood sugar levels** and also helps in suppressing sugar out flow in urine, helps to attain supportive sugar regulating outcome by suppressing the neural retort to sweet taste stimuli.

Studies in mice indicate that bitter mellon seed may have a **cardioprotective effect**. Also has exposed significant antilipolytic and lipogenic movement. It is an outstanding **blood purifier** and helps in maintaining good and clear skin.

Karela also **treats worm infestations and also helps in evading parasitic attack.**

Bitter melon has been used in traditional medicine for several other ailments, including **dysentery, colic, fevers, burns, painful menstruation, scabies and other skin problems.** It has also been used as **abortifacient, for birth control, and to help childbirth.**

The fruit of karela is extremely supportive in conditions like **gout, rheumatoid arthritis and sub-acute cases of the spleen and liver related diseases** and helps in admirable absorption of food in the GI tract. Karela is helpful as an **emetic, purgative, as an anthelmentic, in piles, and jaundice.**

It also helps in maintaining the bodies' activity in the body, helps in triggering the endocrine structure of the body.

Today, bitter melon capsules and teas have thus become more widely available in the Western world. Concentrated fruit extracts are now available in the capsule form, as well as in powders and tinctures. It is also a suggested harmonizing treatment for diabetes, viruses, colds and flu, high cholesterol, psoriasis and certain cancers. The usual method of making bitter herb tea is as follows: One cup of a standard leaf decoction that taken two times daily, or 1-3 ml of tincture taken twice daily. The traditional South American remedy and the most potent way of just using bitter melon for diabetes is to get extract the juice of a fresh bitter melon fruit to be drank twice daily on an empty stomach. For seed or fruit extracts in capsules, just make sure to follow the instructions on the label.

So, Bitter melon:

* Helps in fighting **Diabetes mellitus**
* Cures Infections
* Evades blood impurity - it acts as a **blood cleanser** or filter that by which helps eradicate infection and toxins we get from a variety of microorganisms.
  * Acts as a wonderful purgative - it helps to **get relieve constipation and hemorrhoids**
  * Performs the function of anathematic
  * Treats Piles
  * Fights Skin diseases - it is known to help in that some types of **skin diseases that from the common ones like acne or black heads, to the rare ones like psoriasis.**
  * Helps in curing Leprosy
* Lowers Respiratory disorder - it relieves the chronic cough because Karela also acts as an expectorant by which aids in clearing the lungs. Patients with asthma are so here said to find relief in drinking teas made from Karela leaves.
* Helps in Alcoholism
* Fights Cholera
* For the female population it actually provides comfort during menstrual disorders.

Ayurvedic properties:

As per the age old science Ayurveda, bitter melon helps in subduing the effect of pitta as well as kapha humor or dosha. Owing to its actions it helps to calm the body and also cooling and thereby is helpful in treating the skin related disorders. Due to its properties it is also helpful in healing of wounds early. As it has a katu or pungent and tickta or bitter, it is extremely beneficial in promoting digestion and normalizing the bowel movement. Due to its tickta rasa it is also helpful in evading parasitic infiltration in the body. It as well helps in limiting infection in the body and in regularizing the urinary tract. It has astonishing properties in maintaining the blood sugar levels to the normal limits.

According to the fundamentals of Ayurveda, Bitter melon has:

- Guna or properties - laghu (light) and ruksh (dry).
- Rasa or taste - katu or pungent and tickta or bitter.
- Virya or the potency - ushana or hot

Karela is commonly referred to as bitter melon or bitter gourd and is extremely supportive in metabolism of carbohydrate. It is also helpful in increasing the body resistance as it contains high mineral and vitamin content.

Doze:
One to two capsules two to three times a day later than meals or as directed by physician.

Cautions:
The seeds of bitter melon contains vicine and therefore can trigger symptoms of favism in susceptible individuals. In addition, the red arils of the seeds are reported to be toxic to children, and the fruit is contraindicated during pregnancy. The Karela should not be taken by people with hypotension.

35. Punarnava
Boerhavia diffusa/ B. repens/ Lal Punarnava/ Beshakapore (hindi)/ Nyctaginaceae/ Svethapunarnava (snskr.)/ Raktapunarnava/ Sant/ Gadahpurna/ Mukkurattai/ Red Spiderling, Spreading Hogweed

The word punarnava literally means, one which renews the body, brings back the youth. The botanical name of punarnava is Boerhaavia diffusa and it belongs to family Nyctaginaceae. Punarnava enjoys an important place among medicinal herbs in India since ancient times. In old Indian books of medicine such as the Charaka Samhita and Sushrita Samhita, it is mentioned that the Ayurvedic preparations made from punarnava – namely, punarnavastaka kvath, punarnava kshar, and punarnava taila – were used for the treatment of various ailments. Maharsi Charaka has categorized it as kasahara – alleviates cough, vayasthapana – promotes longevity and maintains youth, svedopaga – adjunct to sucation (sweating therapy) and anuvasanopaga – adjunct to oleating enemas. It is the best rejuvenative to urinary system.

In various Ayurvedic texts, it is also cited to possess the properties like asmarighna – litholytic, indralupta nasaka – mitigates alopecia aerita, sothagha – relieves edema and mutrakrcichraghna alleviates dysuria.

The plant grows throughout India, as a weed in water lands and road sides. It is a perennial straggling herb; much branched, generally spreading on ground or partly ascending. The leaves two on each node, one smaller than the other. The flowers very small, reddish. The plant flowers and fruits in monsoon. The Sanskrit name Svethapunarnava refers to B. repens (with white flowers), whereas Raktapunarnava refers to B. diffusa (with red flowers) (Kirtikar and Basu 1935, 2045; Warrier et al 1994, 281).

From the plant, alkaloids, sterols and steroidal compounds have been isolated. Mainly, the roots and the whole plant is used for the medicinal purpose, externally punarnava is used for fomentation to alleviate the pain and swelling. The fresh juice of its roots instilled into eyes, mitigates the ailments of the eyes like night blindness and conjunctivitis. The paste applied on the wounds, dries up the oozing. Internally, punarnava is beneficial to treat a wide range of diseases. Punarnava is the most commonly used and the best herb to alleviate swelling, due to its potent diuretic property. The leaves of Boerhavia diffusa are often used as a green vegetable in many parts of India. It is believed to improve and protect eyesight.

Boerhavia diffusa has diuretic properties and is used by diabetics to lower blood sugar. Extracts of Boerhaavia diffusa leaves showed antioxidant and hepatoprotective properties in pharmacological models. Punarnavine, an alkaloid isolated from Boerhavia diffusa has been shown in vitro anticancer, antiestrogenic, antiamoebic.
and immunomodulatory activity. Boerhaavia diffusa has also shown antibacterial activity, mainly against Gram-negative bacteria.

It rejuvenates the renal functions and takes out the excessive fluids and kleda by augmenting the urinary output. This action of punarnava helps in number of maladies wherein flushing of the kidneys is desired to reduce the excessive body fluids, like anasarca (general body swelling), ascites, congestive cardiac conditions, anaemia, swollen joints in rheumatic disorders etc.

Punarnava works well in combination with guduci, haritaki, devadara and guggulu, the mixture of these powders given with cow’s urine, alleviates anasarca, ascites, anaemia, worm infestation and diabetes. The sesame oil, medicated with punarnava is very useful as an adjunct to oleating enemas in the treatment of ascites of vata type and flatulence. In large doses, punarnava acts as a purgative.

The herbs like bala, satavari and asvagandha rejuvenate the body by their anabolic properties, whereas punarnava cleanses the body by flushing dosas and mala from the dhatus in the body and reopen the channels and properly nourish them, thus impart an excellent rejuvenative action. In small doses, it augments the appetite and works well as a mild laxative.

The breathlessness of cardiac origin (cardiac asthma) is effectively curbed with its popular formulation punarnavasava. Punarnava effectively reduces fever, especially in malaria. It also helps well in intoxication due to serpent and rat bites (Chopra et al., 1956).

The decoction of rasna, sunthi and punarnava is the best panacea for rheumatic swollen joints, as rasna alleviates the pain and vata, sunthi destroys ama and punarnava reduces the swelling. In dysuria, the plant helps by increasing the amount of urine. Punarnava is also beneficial as a general tonic in debility.

**Traditional Ayurvedic Uses:**

Punarnava is an important rasayana dravyas in Ayurvedic medicine, indicated by the translation of its Sanskrit name, ‘once again new’, thus it is longevity enhancer. The potent rejuvenating properties of Punaranava root are also made use of in a variety of rejuvenating formulae, including the famous lehya Chyavanaprash.

It is good for the kidneys, especially the nephron cells which are damaged by long-term hyperglycemia (diabetes).

Punarnava enhances the quality of 6 of the 7 categories of bodily tissues, including nutrient plasma (Rasa Dhatu), blood (Rakta Dhatu), muscle (Mamsa Dhatu), fat (Meda Dhatu), bone marrow and nerves (Majja Dhatu), and reproductive fluids (Shukra Dhatu).

Punarnava however also has a number of more mundane uses, especially for its ability to correct diseases of the urinary tract and treat edema:

- **As a simple remedy for cystitis** the svarasa or churna of Punarnava can be taken, 10-15 ml of the juice, or 3-5 grams of the powder, thrice daily until symptoms are gone.

- **In the treatment of edema** 10-15 ml of the fresh juice of the leaves can be mixed with a small amount of Maricha (Piper nigrum) or Shunthi (Zingiber officinalis), taken twice daily for several weeks. The fresh juice is also taken in jaundice and in menstrual disorders. In the treatment of edema as well as colic, bloating, flatulence, constipation, hemorrhoids, intestinal parasites, and anemia, the Chakradatta recommends Punarnavamandura, comprised of equal parts Punarnava, Trivit, Shunthi (Zingiber officinalis), Pippali, Maricha (Piper nigrum), Vidanga, Devadaru, Chitraka, Pushkaramula (Inula helenium root), Haridra, Danti (Baliospermum montanum), Chavya (Piper chaba), Indrayava, Katuka, Pippalimula (Pippali root) and Musta, decocted in cow’s urine (Sharma 2002, 118-9).

- **Punarnava is also used to treat inflammatory joint disease**, including gout and rheumatoid arthritis. To this extent the Chakradatta recommends a formula called Shatyadi kvatha, comprised of a decoction of Punarnava with a paste of Shati
(Hedychium spicatum) and Shunthi (Zingiber officinalis), taken every day for at least one week (Sharma 2002, 246). Similarly, the

- Bhavaprakasha advocates a complex formula called Punarnava guggulu in the treatment of gout, hernia, sciatica, muscular atrophy and inflammatory joint disease (Srikanthamurthy 2000, 408). In the treatment of internal abscesses the Sharangadharasa samhita recommends a decoction of Punarnava and Varuna (Crataeva religiosa) (Srikanthamurthy 1984, 71).

- Anemia of kapha type, is effectively treated by punarnava ghrla(ghee).

- Punarnava is also valued in ophthalmic disorders, the Sharangadhara samhita recommending a collyrium (anjana) for itching, prepared by mixing the churna with milk; mixed with honey to treatment ophthalmic discharges; with ghee for corneal wounds; with taila for poor vision; and with rice water (kanjika) for night blindness (Srikanthamurthy 1984, 269).

- In the treatment of alcoholism the Chakradatta recommends a decoction of Punarnava to restore ojas (Sharma 2002, 179). In the treatment of diabetes Punarnava can be combined with Shilajitu and Guduchi. Punarnava is also consumed as a nourishing vegetable in India, rich in vitamins and minerals, and has undergone investigation for its potential in famine relief (Smith et al 1996).

**Pharmacological and clinical properties:**

Pharmacological studies have demonstrated that punarnava possesses punarnavoside, which exhibits a wide range of properties – diuretic, anti-inflammatory, antifibrinolytic, anticonvulsant, antibacterial, antiasthmatic agent, antihepatotoxic, anthelmintic febrifuge, antilepsy, anti-asthmatic, antiscabies, and anti-urethritis and antinematodal activity. The maximum activity was observed in samples collected in the rainy season. Due to the combination of activities, Punarnava is regarded therapeutically as highly efficacious for the treatment of inflammatory renal diseases and common clinical problems such as nephrotic syndrome, oedema, and ascites resulting from early cirrhosis of the liver and chronic peritonitis.

The plant is reported to be efficacious in abdominal tumors and cancers. The drug proved useful as a hematinic and as a growth promoter in children fed with milk fortified with the drug. In the form of a powder or an aqueous decoction, the drug was found to be useful in the treatment of nephritic syndrome and compared well with corticosteroids. The drug decreased the albumin urea; the serum protein was increased and serum cholesterol level was lowered.

Singh and Udupa (1972) reported that dried root powder showed curative efficiency when administered orally for one month to children or adults suffering from helminth infection. The subjects became worm-free within five days of treatment. The drug, singly or in combination withother drugs, was found to be effective in liver disorders, heart diseases (hypertension, angina, cardiac failure, etc.), respiratory tract infections, leukorrhea, spermatorrhea, etc.

The purified glycoprotein from B. diffusa exhibited strong antimicrobial activity against RNA (ribonucleic acid) bacteriophages (Awasthi and Menzel, 1986). With much of the clinical research validating its long history of different uses in natural medicine, the commercial bulk of punarnava in India represents heterogeneous medicinal uses. Researchers assessed the neuropsychopharmacological and anti-stress profile of Boerhavia diffusa in a series of tests. B. diffusa also reduced severity and numbers of gastric ulcers in swimming stress model (Sharma et al 1990).

**Ayurvedic properties:**
In Ayurvedic tests, two varieties of punarnava white and red have been mentioned. The white punarnava is pungent, bitter and astringent in taste, pungent in the post digestive effect and has cold potency. The white variety alleviates all the three doshas. The red one alleviates pitta dosha but aggravates vata dosha. Punarnava possesses light and dry attributes.

The various nighantus typically differentiate between Svethapunarnava and Raktapunarnava, and based on this, provide differing and sometimes contradictory accounts of the dravyguna.

- **Rasa:** tikta, madhura, katu, kashaya (Svethapunarnava); tikta (Raktapunarnava)
- **Vipaka:** madhura (Svethapunarnava); katu (Raktapunarnava)
- **Virya:** ushna, ruksha (Svethapunarnava); shita, laghu (Raktapunarnava)
- **Karma:** dipana, bhedana (Svethapunarnava), stambhana (Raktapunarnava), sulaprashamana, krimiaghna, chedana, svasahara, mutravirechana, shotahara, hrdaya, vishaghna, artavajanana, rasayana, tridoshahara; the Bhavaprakasha states that Raktapunarnava increases Vata (Srikanthamurthy 2001, 265; Dash 1991, 57-8; Kirtikar and Basu 1935, 78; Warrier et al 1994, 283).

**Dosha Effects:**

**Tissues:** Plasma,blood

**Indications:** Dyspepsia, gastritis, ulcer, constipation (Svethapunarnava), diarrhea and dysentery (Raktapunarnava), intestinal parasites, fistula, jaundice, cirrhosis, splenomegaly, fever, cough, bronchitis, asthma, pleurisy, urinary tenesmus, renal diseases, gonorrhea, edema, ascites, scrotal enlargement, hemorrhage, scabies, lumbago, myalgia, leucorrhrea, dysmenorrhea, heart disorders, heart valve stenosis, anemia, epilepsy, debility and fatigue, ophthalmia

**Contraindications:** Pregnancy; the Bhavaprakasha states the Raktapunarnava is contraindicated in Vatakopa conditions. Due to its potential GABAnergic activity Punarnava may be contraindicated with concurrent use of tranquilizers, antidepressant and antiseizure drugs. Nadkarni states that in high doses Punarnava may act as an emetic (1954, 207). Similarly, a combination of Punarnava, Devadaru, Guduchi, Patha (Cissampelos pariera), Bilva, Gokshura, Brhati (Solanum indicum), Kantakari, Haridra, Daruharidra, Pippali, Chitrika and Vasaka, reduced to a fine powder and taken with cow’s urine is used in abdominal enlargement secondary to intestinal parasites (Sharma 2002, 347).

In

**Classical Ayurvedic Preparations:** Punarnavasava/ Punarnavadi mandura/ Punarnavasataka/ Punarnavambu/ Punarnava guggula.

**Part used:** whole herb, root. Each part has a different therapeutic value and must be prepared in its own way for maximum benefits.

**Dosage:**

- Churna: 3-5g
- Svarasa: fresh herb, 10-15mL
- Kvatha: dried root, 60-120mL
- Tincture: dried root, 1:3, 45%; 2-5 mL

36. Shankhpushpi
Shankhpushpi is a perennial herb with a small woody and branched rootstock, 4 to 12 inches long, densely hairy. The branches rise up to some extent and then prevails on the ground and on grass. The petiole is minute and the base is acute. The flower has wide and shiny upper parts, and it smells like radish if it gets rubbed. The flowers are white, pink or thick rose colour. It has funnel shaped rounds and brownish or blakish coloured seeds. The entire bush is black plum or grey colour.

A twining perennial herb, Convolvulus pluricaulis occurs in the plains of Northern Indian and Bihar.

In the rainy season Sankha Pushpi would be found naturally on rocky and fallow lands in India. It is expansive and is seen in grass like seedlings. In many places this is a perennial plant. The stems live many years. By the colour distinction in the flowers it can be divided into three categories. 1. White 2. Blue 3. Canscora decussate (Gentianaceae). This plant is also called as Shankhahuli. In most places doctors call this flower as Shankha Pushpi. In fact, for the medicinal purpose, one should use the white flower only.

The clinical and experimental studies on the Kamya Rasayana and Naimittika Rasayana have put forth significant Medhya Rasayana effect of Sankhpuspi as could be seen by its barbiturate hyponosis potentiation effect and anti-hyponosis potentiation effect and anti-hypertensive effects.

Chemical studies of whole plant have shown the presence of glycosides, coumarins, flavonoids and alkaloids. Shankha pushpine, (the alkaloid) has been identified as the active principle. B. sitosterol glycoside, Hydroxy Cinnamic acid, Octacosanol tetracosane along with glucose, sucrose also have been isolated from the plant.

Little human research has been published in the Western medical literature regarding this plant. One study shows shankhpushpi to have anti-ulcer effects due to augmentation of mucosal defensive factors like mucin secretion and glycoproteins. Another study showed that shankhapushpi may be helpful in improving symptoms of hyperthyroidism by reducing the activity of a liver enzyme.

The whole herb is used medicinally in the form of decoction with cumin and milk in fever, nervous debility, loss of memory, also in syphilis, and scrofula.

Shankhpushpi is used as a brain tonic, alterative and febrifuge. There is a pertinent reference in Ayurvedic literature about the use of the drug as a brain tonic in hypotensive syndromes. The plant is reported to be a prominent memory improving drug. The pharmacological studies of the herb have shown varying degree of its hypotensive and tranquilizing effects. It is reported to reduce mental tension.
Shankpushpi is used traditionally to treat insomnia, fatigue, low energy level. Clinical studies have exhibited demonstrable beneficial effects in the patients of anxiety neurosis. This overreaction makes your body produce excess amounts of the stress hormones adrenaline and cortisol, which can make you hyperalert and anxious. Practitioners believe shankpushpi calms your nerves by regulating your body's production of these hormones. As a result, you feel more balanced throughout the day and sleep better at night. The herb induces a feeling of calm and peace, good sleep and a relief in anxiety, stresses, mental fatigue, producing a significant reduction in the level of anxiety, neuroticism arising due to various levels of stresses, much like the herbs kava-kava and valerian. The herb appears to produce its action by modulation of neuro-chemistry of the brain. Further, the herb is non-toxic and its use does not produce any side effects. On the other hand, there is invigorating effect in improvement of health and weight gain.

It is a sovereign remedy in bowel complaints especially dysentery. The ethanolic extract of the plant reduces total serum cholesterol, triglycerides, phospholipids and nonesterfied fatty-acid.

**Improving memory** with Shankhpushpi:

1. Take 3 to 6 grams of Shankhapushpi powder with milk early in the morning to enhance the memory power. Fatigue would vanish if you are studying for long hours.

2. Give 2 to 4 grams of Shankhapushpi powder with 1 gram of Sweet Flag (bach) powder to raise intelligence in children and to make them sharp.

3. Take its powder 2-4 grams, adding it to honey or sugar for 6 months. Wrinkles would disappear from your face in the old age. Memory power and astuteness would be increased.

4. For Sharp memory take 3 to 6 grams Shankhapushpi powder and honey with milk.

**Treating anxious conditions:**

Take 275 mg in pill form or 1 teaspoon of the powder two times a day with meals. Take it on a cycle of six days on, one day off to prevent your body from developing a tolerance to the herb. Your anxiety should lessen within a week, and you can discontinue the herb once you feel better. Do not take it for more than two months.

**Treating Epilepsy** with Shankhpushpi:

1. Take 2 grams of Shankhapushpi juice with honey to cure epilepsy.

2. Take powders of Shankhapushpi, Sweet flag and Brahmi in equal quantities. To cure epilepsy, hysteria and delirium take 3 grams of this mixture twice a day.

3. Dry in the shade 1 kilogram of Shankhapushpi, add 2 kilograms of Sugar and make powder. sieve it and fill in bottles. Take 5 to 10 grams with milk for better memory.

4. Shankhapushpi’s juice 10-20 grams, powder of Saussurea lappa roots (kooth) 500 grams with honey to cure epilepsy.

5. Take swaras of Shankhapushpi with honey to cure the state of delirium.
Treatment for Head Ache:
Shankhapushpi 1 gram, Black Henbane 250 milligrams with hot water to remove headache within 5 minutes.

Treatment for Vomiting with Shankhpushpi:
Take panchang of Shankhapushpi juice, 2 spoons, add one quid of black pepper powder and give it with honey over and over again to control vomiting.

Cure for Bed Urination with Shankhpushpi:
If child is urinating in their bed at night times, give Shankhapushpi’s powder 2 grams and black sesame 1 gram along with milk to check bed urinating problem.

Treatment of Diabetes:
1. Take Shankhapushpi 6 grams morning and evening along with cow's butter or with water to control diabetes.
2. To overcome the weakness caused by diabetes, take 2-4 grams of powder or swaras of 10-20 mg.

Treatment for Sun Stroke with Shankhpushpi:
When the patient would get unconscious state and babbling, you may give Shankhapushpi powder 5-10 grams with milk and honey for the benefit of the patient.

Treatment for Bleeding:
Take 10-20 grams of Shankhapushpi, add honey to control bleeding.

Treatment for High Blood Pressure with Shankhpushpi:
Take fresh swaras of Shankhapushpi 10-20 mg. every morning and evening for some days to get rid of High blood pressure. Decoction of the drug with Ocimum sanctum is administered in fevers accompanied by indigestion or diarrhoea. Evolvulus abinoides has got antidysenteric and antiseptic properties.

Parts used in medical properties:
The root is used with the sandal for intermittent childhood fever.
The leaves are made into cigarettes and smoked in chronic bronchitis and asthma.
The plant is useful in internal haemorrhages.
The oil promotes the growth of hair. Decoction was given in cases of malarial fever.
Use in Ayurveda: Ayurvedic classics namely Charak, Sushrta, Astang Sangrah and Astang Harida provide ample reference for management of various diseases. According to Ayurvedic concept, Rasayan therapy simultaneously effects the body and mind and brings about physical and pschic improvement. This therapy prevents the effects of ageing, develops intelligence and increases the body resistance agains diseases.

The World Health Organisation has laid down that "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well being and not merely absence of disease or infirmity". Rasayana drug in Ayurveda may be equated with modern immunomodulator drugs since they possess similar properties and perform similar functions.
Effect on Dosha: Pacifies Tridoshas especially In Vata and Pitta dominating disorders. Its use improves the balance and vitiation in kapha-vata-pitta doshas as the herb is astringent and bitter.

Rasa: Tikta (Bitter)
Guna: Pichchilla (Slimmy), Snigdha (Unctous)
Virya: Shita (Cold)
Vipaka: Madhura (Sweet)

Caution: Consult your health care practitioner before taking it with other medication, like an antidepressant. Do not take it if you are pregnant.

Useful parts: Seed, bark, flower, fruit, root - panchang (five parts).

37. Health benefits of Artichokes

Artichokes are low in calories, with only 60 calories and fat-free. It is a natural diuretic, a digestive aid, provides nutrition to health-promoting bacteria in the intestinal tract. Some studies suggest that fresh artichokes help control bloodsugars in diabetics and lower cholesterol levels thus warding off arteriosclerosis. The total antioxidant capacity of artichoke flower heads is one of the highest reported for vegetables. Artichokes are nutrient rich, you’re getting sixteen essential nutrients! Good source of fiber, potassium (K), magnesium (Mg), calcium (Ca), sodium (Na) - which are important alkaline minerals. Also artchoke is rich in iron, zinc (the main component to form enzymes, which are essential for proper digestion), phosphorus, manganese, vitamins of B group.

As a part of a well balanced, high- fiber diet, artichokes can help reduce the risk of certain types of heart disease, cancers and birth defects.

Ayurvedic texts consider artichokes, including the leaves, to have many benefits:
- Cleaning and detoxification of the body
- Detoxifies the liver and the skin.
- Diuretic
- Breath freshener
- Blood cleansers
- Improves bile production and secretion

Modern research is coming to the same conclusion about artichokes as the Ayurvedic physicians who wrote about the artichoke’s attributes around 1,000 B.C.

Current research have shown that because of the presence of:
Cynarin in artichoke, a compound that causes an increased bile flow, it strengthens the liver function, gall bladder function, and raising of the HDL/LDL ratio. This reduces cholesterol levels, which diminishes the risk for arteriosclerosis and coronary heart disease. The majority of the cynarin found in artichoke is located in the pulp of the leaves, though dried leaves and stems of artichoke also contain it.

Silymarin is another compound found in artichokes that has powerful antioxidant properties and may help the liver regenerate (the liver is 95% regenerative) and also heal the tissues.

Ayurvedic properties of Artichoke:
Rasa (Taste): Astringent, Sweet
Virya (Affect on Digestion): Heating
Vipaka (Post Digestive Affect): Sweet
Action: Diuretic, regenerative, nutrient etc.
Vata: Increase – due to its main Rasa Astringent. You can add somt ghee, butter or oil when eating to make this easier for Vata dominant people to digest.
Pitta: Reduce
Kapha: Reduce
Acid/Alkaline Scale: Slightly Alkaline

How To Cook Artichokes:
Cooking time depends on how large the artichoke is - the larger the artichoke, the longer it takes to cook.

Boiling Method:
Stand prepared artichoke in a deep saucepan or pot with 3 inches boiling water (if desired, oil, lemon juice and/or seasonings can be added to cooking water). Cover with a lid and gently boil approximately 25 to 40 minutes, depending on size of the artichokes, or until a petal near the center pulls out easily. When cooking, remove from pot and stand artichoke upside down on a rack to drain.

Steaming Method:
Place prepared artichoke on a rack above 1- to 2-inches of boiling water. Cover and steam approximately 25 to 45 minutes, depending on size, or until a petal near the center pulls out easily.

Tips: If boiling, salt can be added to the water, if desired. It may be preferable not to cover the pot while the artichokes are boiled, so the acids will boil out into the air. Covered artichokes, in particular those that have been cut, can turn brown due to the enzymatic browning and chlorophyll oxidation. If not cooked immediately, placing them in water lightly acidulated with vinegar or lemon juice prevents the discoloration.

Tea:
Artichokes can also be made into an herbal tea. It affords some of the qualities of the whole vegetable, acting as a diuretic and improving liver function. Artichoke tea is produced as a commercial product in the Da Lat region of Vietnam.

Bon Apetit!

38. Spirulina - the healthiest food
What is Spirulina?

Spirulina is one of the blue-green algae due to the presence of both chlorophyll (green) and phycocyanin (blue) pigments in its cellular structure. The name "spirulina" derives from Latin and means “small spiral”, as its form.

Spirulina is also unusual among algae because it is a "nuclear plant" meaning it is on the developmental cusp between plants and animals. It is considered somewhat above plants because it does not have the hard cellulose membranes characteristic of plant cells, nor does it have a well-defined nucleus. Yet its metabolic system is based on photosynthesis, a process of direct food energy production utilizing sunlight and chlorophyll, which is typical of plant life forms.

Spirulina Platensis is the only living organism on our Earth that lived without no change for millions of years thanks to its unique biochemical composition. Our Mother Nature carefully balanced the quantity of all possible vitamins, macro-and micronutrients, all amino acids (including the essential ones), so that this plant has become an undisputed champion.

Spirulina was a food source for the Aztecs and other Mesoamericans until the 16th century. The Aztecs called it "techuitlat". Spirulina may have an even longer history in Chad, as far back as the 9th century Kanem Empire. It is still in daily use today, dried into cakes called “dihé”, which are used to make broths for meals, and also sold in markets. The spirulina is harvested from small lakes and ponds around Lake Chad. The largest commercial producers of spirulina are located in the United States, Thailand, India, Taiwan, China, Pakistan, Burma (Myanmar) and Chile.

Spirulina is one of the most concentrated natural sources of nutrition known. In total, spirulina has about 2.000 vitamins, minerals, amino acids including essential (which cannot be produced by our organism), polyunsaturated fatty acids, enzymes and rhamnose sugars (complex natural plant sugars). Spirulina acts as a functional food, feeding beneficial intestinal flora, especially Lactobacillus and Bifidus. Spirulina is also called "a green Sun" or materialized solar energy. This is an incredibly energetic product, among all

This plant is rich in:

Chlorophyll (a green blood!), it is important to know that, Chlorophyll which can be considered as blood of the green plants has the same structure as our red blood cells, the difference is only in 4 molecules of Fe (iron, which is red), and chlorophyll has 4 molecules of Mg (magnesium, which is green). So, it should be a rule to eat all greens as much as possible.
Thus, the use of spirulina has a positive effect on children suffering from anemia. 40 % of people on Earth suffer from anemia. For pregnant women it helps in breastfeeding, and women with uterine bleeding. As a result, regular intake of spirulina significantly increases hemoglobin.

**Phycocyanin** – in the composition of spirulina there is a lot of blue pigment - the only known substance that can stop cancer cell growth, which cannot be found in other products on Earth (scientifically proven).

**Protein** - spirulina is 65 to 71 percent complete protein (which is 1.5 times more than in soybeans), with all essential amino acids in perfect balance. It is rather important for all the vegetarians to consume it.

**Beta-carotene (provitamin A),** which is as more as in 10 kilograms of dry carrots! So, it can be easy to improve your eye sight.

**Thiamine (vitamin B1)** - strengthens the nervous system, reduces fatigue, normalizes sleep, heart rate, eliminates the short breath. Often use of dark black tea or coffee can lead to the lack of this important vitamin.

**Inositol (vitamin B8)** – regulates the nervous system, the functioning of gastrointestinal system, supports a healthy liver, helps to eliminate carcinogens and normalizes cholesterol levels.

**Folic acid (vitamine B9)** - required for the formation of hemoglobin. Participates in protein metabolism, it is an important factor for the cells reproduction.

**Gamma-linolenic acid** is found only in spirulina, and in breast milk. This substance is also necessary for the prevention and treatment of arthritis.

**Glutamic acid** reduces the need for alcohol, stabilizes mental capacity, is the main food for the brain cells.

**Tyrosine** – this amino acid that helps regulate mood and stimulates the nervous system.

It is the "elixir of youth" - slows down the aging process, prevents graying.

**Cystine** - this amino acid helps form healthy skin, hair, bones, and connective tissue.

It is also required to make glutathione, one of the natural antioxidants that fight free-radical damage. Provides a good functioning of the the pancreas.

**Arginine** – this amino acid helps cleanse the blood from toxins, wastes and radiation. The synthesis of arginine after 30 years greatly reduces. This amino acid is also indispensable for children as it accelerates the synthesis of growth hormone and should be obtained from food.

Spirulina thrives in warm, alkaline fresh-water bodies. It can survive up to 60 C degrees temperature. Some of its desert species survive by falling into a deep sleep, even if water evaporates and temperature on the rocks goes up to 70 degrees it will remain alive! So, this shows us that Magic plant Spirulina preserves its protein, amino acids, vitamins, enzymes, which are stored in her cell even at this kind of temperatures, whereas in normal conditions the temperature of 50-54 degrees for most enzymes is fatal (for protein it is 60 degrees C, and certain vitamins and amino acids under these conditions begin to lose their useful properties).

This ability of Spirulina to grow in hot and alkaline environments ensures its hygienic status, as no other organisms can survive to pollute the waters in which this algae thrives. Unlike the stereotypical association of microorganisms with "germs" and
"scum", Spirulina is in fact one of the cleanest, most naturally sterile foods found in nature.

With constant use of spirulina you will greatly increase the absorption of food you consume, and it will be enough to eat 75% of your usual diet and your body will obtain all the necessary nutrients and even more!

Nowadays Spirulina is slowly becoming one of the most important plants of mass cultivation in the world. Let us enjoy the healthiest food ever!

39. Atibala

Abutilon indicum/ Kabi/ Kakahi/ Chambi/ Tara-kanchi/ Atibala/ Balika/ Thuthi/ Vatyapushpy/ Bhuribala/ Jhumka/ Karandi/ Madni(Beng.)/ Paniyaratutti (Tamil)/ Vatyapushpy/ Bhuribala/ Indian Abutilon/ Indian mallow/ Country-mallow (Eng.)

This is a weed widely used as a medicinal plant in Ayurveda to treat many diseases. The common names of Abutilon Indicum are Indian mallow, Atibala (Sanskrit), Dong kui zi, Mi Ian cao (China), Guimauve (Guadaloupe). The plant grows throughout India and in Sri Lanka, at about an elevation of 1000-1500 metres. The perennial shrub grows 1.25-2 metres in height. The plant flowers in June and bears fruits in November.

Atibala is very much used in Siddha medicines. In fact, the root, bark, flowers, leaves and seeds are all used for medicinal purposes by Tamils. The leaves are used as adjunct to medicines used for pile complaints. The flowers are used to increase semen in men. Athibala is a common plant in India. It can be recognized by its characteristic shape of the seed pod. It is one of the plants in the "Bala Chatushtaya". Bala means strength in Sanskrit and Chatusta means 4. The 4 plants are Bala, Athibala, Mahabala and Nagabala. All the plants are used as tonics to improve vigour in the body.

In ancient scriptures of Ayurveda, Balas are used as Balya, or tonic for strengthening the body. Bala, Brela, Atibala, Mahabala and Nagbala belong to the genus Sida of family Malvaceae is in use for medicinal purposes for a long time, in traditional system of medicine, i.e, the ayurveda. Sida cordata (Burm.f.) Borssum is Rajbala or Bhumibala; Kharenti Bala is Sida cordifolia Linn. and Sida rhombifolia Linn. is Mahabala. The other Bala is Atibala, which is botanically known as Abutilon indicum. Literally the Ati means
very and Bala means powerful, referring to the properties of this plant as very powerful.

All the four balas, balacatustaya, have sweet taste, sweet post digestive effect and cold potency. They possess oily and slimy attributes and alleviate all the three dosas. Their chief properties are tonic and oja vardhaka – augment ojas, the subtle essence of all vital fluids, responsible for health, harmony and spiritual growth. They are beneficial in treating gout, tuberculosis and raktapitta bleeding disorders. (Kaiyadeva Nighantu). Atibala is considered balya in Ayurveda, which means that it increases strength, vigor and vitality. It is used in facial paralysis and joint disorders.

Atibala is considered balya in Ayurveda, which means that it increases strength, vigor and vitality. It is used in facial paralysis and joint disorders. Atibala, is used externally, to alleviate the pain and swelling. Internally, the roots and seeds are used for medicinal purpose. In tuberculosis, with cavitation, atibala is valuable as it nourishes the mamsa dhatu (muscle tissue) and augments the strength. It also augments the seminal fluids and normalizes the sukra ksaya, which many a times is a cause of tuberculosis according to Ayurvedic concept. Atibala is salutary in raktapitta to arrest the bleeding tendencies. It is useful as an adjunct in vata diseases like paralysis, facial palsy, cervical spondylosis etc. The diuretic like property of the plant is useful in urinary disorders like dysuria. It works well as a uterine tonic as well as an aphrodisiac.

**Medicinal Uses:**
- The plant is used as a laxative, astringent, diuretic, anti-inflammatory, analgesic and expectorant.
- It is also used to reduce fever; sugar levels, bleeding etc.
- It is useful in gout, tuberculosis, ulcers, bleeding disorders, and worms.
- A decoction is used in toothache and tender gums.
- Roots of the plant are useful in fever, chest affection and urethritis.
- A decoction is used in toothache and tender gums.
- Roots of the plant are useful in fever, chest affection and urethritis.

The root is used to derive an oil, which is used to cure various ailments in Ayurveda. All parts of the plant is used to prepare powders, decoctions etc., In ancient days, maidens were made to consume a spoonful of this powder with a spoonful of honey, once in a day, for 6 months until the day of marriage, for safe and quick pregnancy. The leaves can also be used to treat ulcers, headaches, gonorrhea & bladder infection. This particular tip is how to treat knee pain:

The entire plant is pulled out and washed well and the juice is extracted. Equal quantity of sesame seed oil is mixed with it and heated on a low flame till the mixture stops bubbling. Cool and filter and store in a glass bottle. This Atibala thailam is rubbed gently on painful knees for the pain to subside.

**Ayurvedic Properties:**
- Rasa - Tikta, Madhura
- Guna - Snigda, Grahi
- Virya - Seeta

**Effect on Dosha:** Plant pacifies tridoshas, especially Vata and Pitta

**Edible Parts:** Leaves, Root, Flowers, Fruits

**Classical Ayurvedic Preparations:**
- Atibala svarasa (juice)
- Atibala taila (oil)
Psoralea corylifolia/ Purple fleabane/ Psoralea seeds/ Bavachi/ Babchi/ Psoralea

Psoralea corylifolia is an important plant in the Indian Ayurveda and Tamil Siddha systems of medicine, and also Chinese medicine. It grows throughout the sandy loamy plains of Eastern and Central India. Bakuchi means which pacifies Vata in the body. Bakuchi are those little black seeds that are famous for their properties to heal skin disorders. The outer cover is sticky and has coumarins that have the therapeutic properties. Some of the common names are Babchi and Psoralea and Bakuci. There are many health benefits of this herb.

P. corylifolia extract contains a number of bioactive compounds that are the molecular basis of its action, including flavonoids, coumarins. Also a very high concentrations of the anticancer chemical genistein have been found in the leaves of Psoralea corylifolia. Vitiligo, leucoderma or white patches, Bakuchi is the best medicine to be used internally as well as locally on these patches. Bakuchi is irritant on the skin and it removes the upper layers of the skin and brings healthy skin by improving the distribution of the melanin in the skin and cures this condition. Bakuchi helps skin to rejuvenate by working on the liver and removing the toxins out of the body.

Ayurvedic Benefits of Bakuchi:
It is used in ayurveda to treat the below problems:
- It is used as Srotas i.e. channel for treating respiratory, circulatory, and muscular disorders.
- It is also used to treat Dhatu i.e. tissue that includes the problems related to plasma, blood and muscles.
- Bakuchi is also used to treat Guna i.e. quality of the body functioning.
- It is used to treat Vipaka i.e. the post-digestive effect.

Medicinal Health Benefits:

- Dermatology:
Bakuchi is useful in skin diseases because it removes all toxins from the skin and revitalizes it. When used in tincture form, it heals alopecia. It even heals eczema, vitiligo, psoriasis in both oil and tincture form. It can be used both internally and externally. The oil of this herb acts as an irritant by stimulating the melanoblastic cells. This helps in normal pigmentation, which can take up to three months. Bakuchi powdered or oil used locally in leucoderma and dermatoses. Bakuchi can be used for wound healing. Bakuchi improves hair growth.
**Reproductive Benefits:**
The most unconventional use of the Bakuchi is as an aphrodisiac where it works on spermatogenesis and helps in infertility. It is known to treat premature ejaculation and impotence. It mainly acts by treating urinary problems like incomplete voiding, dribbling, and enuresis, especially in children. It even treats uterine bleeding, which occurs due to any imbalance in the dosha.

**Lungs:**
Bakuchi due to its bio energetic property is good in treating respiratory discomfort like cough and asthma. So, this herb treats asthma, which occurs mainly due to an increase in the vata dosha. It acts by balancing the vata dosha. It is reduced by the hot and sweet properties of bakuchi.

**Digestion:**
Bakuchi is used in indigestion, ama and constipation. It even treats other digestive problems like diarrhea, abdominal pain, and borborygmus. These also occur when the vata dosha is high. Bakuchi is useful in all types of worms especially round worms.

**Heart:**
Bakuchi stimulates the heart and the circulatory system, it is used in cardiac failure and oedema produced by it.

**Muscles:**
It mainly acts by toning the lower back and warms the lower back. It acts by balancing your vata dosha and relieves spasmodic pains and chronic pains.

**Urinary System:**
It mainly controls incontinence, urination, and strengthens the sphincter walls of the urinary tract. Bakuchi have a liver stimulant property so it is useful in piles.

**Also:**
Bakuchi is beneficial in all types of infectious disease; Bakuchi fruit have an anti-inflammatory and analgesic property. Bakuchi has notable effect against Helicobacter pylori and can treat diseases caused by infection of Helicobacter pylori.

Here are some of the properties of ayurvedic action on some of the doshas:
- Vranya – treating ulcers;
- Raktapitta – alleviates bleeding problems;
- Krmina saka – anthelminthic;
- Jvaraghna – anti-fever;
- Kustha – heals skin problems;
- Hrdaya – it acts as a heart tonic;
- Kaphahara – destroys excess of kapha

**Bio energetics:**
Rasa (Taste) – Katu (Pungent); Tikta (Bitter)
Guna (Characteristics) – Laghu (Light); Ruksha (Un- unctuous)
Veerya (Potency) – Ushna (Hot)
Vipaka (Post digestion effect) – Katu (Pungent)

**Effect on Tridosha:**
Bakuchi pacifies Kapha and Vata Doshas; i.e. it can be used in all the diseases which originate from aggravation of Kapha/ Pitta or Kapha – Pitta.

**Combinations:**
This herb is always used in combination with other ayurvedic herbs. Some of the excellent combinations are:
- Pippali and ashwagandha for coughs
- Ashwagandha and bala for reproductive problems
- Haritaki and gokshura for urinary problems
- Nutmeg and haritaki for chronic diarrhea
- Neem, kutki, and manjishtha sariya for skin problems

**Contraindications:**
This herb is contraindicated in pregnancy and if your pitta dosha is high. You must be cautious when applying it externally. It must not be used on patients, who are undergoing PUVA therapy as there is an increased risk of photosensitive reactions.

Useful part: Seed; Seed oil
Dosage: use up to 10% of the formula i.e 3-9 grams every day.

41. Bakul tree

*Mimusops elengi/ Spanish cherry/ Medlar/ Bullet wood/ Bakul*

**Other names are:**
- Hindi: Maulsari
- Urdu: Kirakuli
- Manipuri: Bokul lei
- Tamil: Magizhamboo
- Malayalam: Ilanni
- Bengali: Bakul
- Marathi: Bakuli
- Konkani: Omval
- Kannada: Ranjal
- Gujarati: Barsol
Mimusops elengi is a medium-sized (9-18 m) evergreen tree found in tropical forests in South Asia, Southeast Asia, Northern Australia and it grows throughout India.

**Ayurvedic uses**

Bakula is one of the herbs mentioned in all ancient scriptures of Ayurveda and has been used for medicinal purpose, since centuries. In Meghaduta, one of the highly esteemed ancient poetry of the great poet Kalidasa, there is a mention of bakula tree. Susruta has cited it to have astringent property and beneficial to alleviate kapha and pitta dosas (Susruta Samhita), Cakradatta has mentioned about its usefulness in dental diseases, especially dental aches. Bakula has innumerable synonyms portraying its peculiarities like surabhi – fragrant, madhu gandha – sweet odoured, cira – puspa flowers remain fresh and fragrant for long duration etc.

According to ayurveda, this herb is considered as Danta dadharyakara. This means it is used for treating and curing dental problems. Mimosops elengi works as a best medicine for the gums and teeth. Sanskrit texts named this herb bakula because of its attractive flowers as bakula itself means flower. The bark, flowers, fruits and seeds are astringent, cooling, anthelmintic, tonic and febrifuge, all have great medicinal value.

**Extract of flowers** used against heart diseases, leucorrhoea, menorrhagia, and act as antidiuretic in polyuria and antitoxin. The snuff made from the dried and powdered flowers used in a disease called Ahwa in which strong fever, headache and pain in the neck, shoulders and other parts of the body occurs. Powder of dried flowers is a brain tonic and useful as a snuff to relieve cephalalgia.

**The edible fruit** is softly hairy becoming smooth, ovoid, bright red-orange when ripe. Ripened fruits facilitates in burning urination. The ripe fruit pounded and mixed with water is given to promote delivery in childbirth. The ripened fruits facilitate the urination and the squash prepared from them, alleviates burning micturition and helps elimination of urinary calculi. Bakula ripe fruits are also used as general tonic.

**Boil the bakula leaves** in water to get excellent mouthwash that has the capability of preventing bad or foul breath just like Neem.

**The wood** is a luxurious wood that is extremely hard, strong and tough, and rich deep red in color. Decoction of bark is used to wash the wounds (as it has curative and antiseptic properties), if gargled can be helpful for swollen gum. Chewing piece of Bakula bark makes mobile teeth stock still. In mobile teeth or dental caries decoction of Bakula bark should be kept in mouth as long as one can.

**Medicinal value:**

The plant is used both externally as well as internally.

- Bakula helps in the management of the dental caries. It even makes the mobile teeth still.
- Bakula correct the assimilation process of digestive system and is therefore used in diarrhea, dysentery and intestinal worms.
- Bakula helps in the management of gastric ulcers by decrease gastric acid secretory activity along with strengthening of mucosal defensive mechanisms.
- It alleviates the toxins, hence useful as an anti toxin.
- Bakula are very effective in skin disease like leucoderma.
- Bakula Flowers and Bark have good haemostatic activity and are therefore used in menorrhagia, leucorrhoea, spermatorrhoea, cystitis, gonorrhoea etc.
- It also acts as a cardiac rejuvenator. Because this is a natural potent calcium channel blocker, it helps in relieving blood pressure naturally.
- This herb is found to be an excellent remedy for urinary tract infections.
- This is one of the best natural as a haemostatic which makes it a remedy for heavy uterine bleeding and bleeding piles too.
- It also has anti-pyretic properties.
• Bakula also found to be every effective against menstrual problems.
• It even corrects assimilation.

**Actions according to Ayurveda:**

Danta dadharyakara - makes teeth stronger than before;
Chala danta sthirakara - makes mobile teeth stock still;
Krimi dantapaha - has very good results in dental caries;
Vishaghna - useful in toxicities;
Shwitrahara - useful in leucoderma like conditions;
Hrudya - cardiac rejuvenator;
Grahi - corrects assimilation so that conditions like passing loose stools is no more there.

**Ayurvedic Properties of Mimusops elengi**

Rasa (Taste) – Kashaya (Astringent), Katu (Pungent)
Guna (Characteristics) – Guru (Heavy)
Veerya (Potency) - Sheet (Cool and calm)
Vipaka (Post digestion effect) – Katu (Pungent)

Effect on Doshas: alleviates Kapha and Pitta dosas.

**Classical Ayurvedic Preparations**

• Bakuladya taila
• Bakula puspa curna
• Bakula tvak kvatha etc.

**Useful part:** Bark, fruit, flowers
Decoction of the bark – 50 to 100ml; powder of flowers – 1 to 2 gms; fruits used as a food item.

**Doses:** Bark piece-10 gm for chewing; Powder -2-4 gm for internal use ; Decoction-50-100ml

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**42. Boswellia**

*Boswellia serrata/ Shallaki/ Guggal/ Salai Guggal/ Indian olibanum tree/ Susrava* - means it has a resin exudate with a pleasant odor/ *Gajabhakshya* - means the elephants eat its leaves with great interest
Boswellia Serrata is an Indian herb with a rich tradition in the ancient health system of Ayurveda. Boswellia is found throughout Western and Central India. Boswellia Serrata is a tree found in the dry forests in some parts of India. B.S. tree, on injury, exudates an oleo-gum-resin known as Salai Guggal or Indian Frankincense. Boswellia Serrata Gum Resin is widely used in ayurvedic formulations for treating asthma and arthritis.

Its oleo-gum-resin is fragrant, transparent and brownish yellow in color and has powerful anti-inflammatory properties that have been proved through clinical research. It is also found to be anti-fungal, anti-bacterial, analgesic and sedative. The gum oleo-resin consists of essential oils, gum, and terpenoids. The terpenoid portion contains the boswellic acids that have been shown to be the active constituents in Boswellia. The popularity of boswellia, a botanical medicine discovered more than three millennia ago, is experiencing a resurgence. Long recognized for its anti-inflammatory benefits, this oleogum resin also has anti-cancer and immunomodulatory properties. Boswellia, or frankincense, harkens back to ancient India and Egypt.

The health benefits of this herb can be used alone and in combination of other herbs to treat rheumatoid arthritis, back pain and osteoarthritis whether applied internally or externally to the body. Many clinical trials and animal studies have confirmed that this herb provides anti-inflammatory and pain-relieving effects to those in need.

Indian Frankincense is an ushan virya in potency, which is why it acts on all the vata dosha disorders in Ayurveda. It possesses kashaya, tickt and madhur rasa, which suppress diseases and illnesses caused by vata and kapha doshas. Consequently, this is the reason why the herb is heavily counted in relieving pain as vata is known to be the cause behind every pain in the body.

This herb offers an alternative treatment to non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs with its anti-arthritis and anti-inflammatory features. Unlike drugs such as Ibuprofen, Aspirin, Celebrex, and Vioxx, the herb does not irritate the sensitive lining of the digestive tract. In addition, it also provides a great alternative to Prednisone, which is known to be a dangerous steroid. Many studies have also proven the effectiveness and safety of the herb as an anti-inflammatory agent.

When it comes to internal benefits, the herb can be helpful for indigestion, constipation, intestinal disturbance, diarrhea, stomach disorders, urinary tract infections and even tastelessness. It also helps the liver function properly by enhancing its secretions such as bile juices. Other benefits of the herb are proven worthy when it comes to heart-related ailments and the herb is also in possession of anti-cancerous properties. Some even use it as an aphrodisiac agent that helps increase sperm count and quality.

The plant is also known as a wound-healer herb as it can be used to make any injury heal faster and efficiently. It can also increase vision in eyes. Aside from physical feature benefits, the plant can increase intelligence levels as well as mental concentration. Finally, aside from medical benefits, the plant is a great herb to use to eliminate foul odor in some areas.

**Medicinal value:**

- Recent reports show that Boswelia serrata can be useful in joint pain and back pain and can even help in cases where steroids are needed by offsetting some of the symptoms of the problems and therefore helping the patient to use a lower steroid dose.
- Research has identified specific active anti-inflammatory ingredients in Shallaki, which are commonly referred to as boswellic acids. In animal studies, these acids have been shown to significantly reduce inflammation in several ways. They deter inflammatory white cells from infiltrating damaged tissue. They improve blood flow to the joints. And they also block chemical reactions that set the stage
for inflammation to occur in chronic intestinal disorders such as Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis.

- The essential oil of Boswellia serrata was found to be anti-fungal. Anti-inflammatory activity and anti-bacterial activity of extracts have been demonstrated.
- Shallaki is used in rheumatic disorders. It is also used to improve appetite and in general weakness. It has an anti-diarrhoeal action.

**Actions according to Ayurveda:**

Purishavirajaniya - Shallaki imparts/maintains the normal coloration of the feces i.e. it corrects both digestion and assimilation so that the feces are of normal color as by seeing the color of feces it is easy to tell one's metabolic status.

Grahi - Shallaki improves assimilation so that the person passes the stool with normal consistency.

Atisarjit - Shallaki is useful in management of diarrhea.

Shirovirechana - Shallaki is useful in therapeutic cleansing of the body parts above the clavicle level.

Raktapitta hara - Shallaki is useful in management of bleeding tendencies.

Vranahara - Shallaki is a good healer for ulcers.

Pushhtikrit - Shallaki fortifies all the systems of the body.

Twachya - Shallaki rejuvenates the skin.

Arshonashini - Shallaki helps a lot in management of hemorrhoids.

Pradara shantikrit - Shallaki is very useful in managing excessive bleeding per vaginum.

**Bio energetics:**

Rasa (Taste) - Kashaya (Astringent); Tikta (Bitter); Madhura (Sweet)

Guna (Characteristics) - Laghu (Light); Ruksha (Rough)

Veerya (Potency) - Ushna (Warm)

Vipaka (Post digestion effect) - Katu (Pungent)

**Effect on Tridoshas** (Three bio humors): Kapha-Pittashamaka (Pacifies Kapha and Pitta)

**Doses:** Resin- 2-3 gm; Decoction of the bark- 50-100 ml.

For rheumatoid arthritis or osteoarthritis, 150 mg of boswellic acids are taken three times per day. As an example, if an extract contains 37.5% boswellic acids, 400 mg of the extract would be taken three times daily. In the one clinical trial to date, people with ulcerative colitis used 550 mg of boswellia extract three times per day. The side effects from using boswellia are rare but some have reported cases of heartburns, diarrhea, nausea and skin rashes. There are also no known drug interactions or contradictions with the herb. The boswellia herb is extremely affordable and quite a quality product against inflammation and arthritis. Those who use it for an effective means for pain and inflammation should use it with care and according to a physician’s directions.

**Useful parts:** Exudate resin; bark

43. Chandni
Tabernaemontana divaricata/ Crape jasmine/ East Indian rosebay/ Moonbeam/ Carnation of India/ चंदनी Chandni, Chandini / Chameli/ Tagar/ Nandevriksha/ Khsirika/ Ksheeri/ Vishnupriya/ Nandiar vattai (Tamil)/ Sagar (Gujarati)/ Ananta (Marathi)

Crape jasmine is a beautifully shaped evergreen shrub that forms symmetrical 6 foot high mounds. It is very common in Throughout India, cultivated as garden plant. An evergreen, much branched shrub grows up to 2.5 meters in height. Like many members of the Apocynaceae family, stems exude a milky latex when broken. The large shiny leaves are deep green and are 6 or more inches in length and about 2 inches in width. Flowers white fragrant, in axillary or terminal cymes Fruits follicles, ribbed and curved, orange or bright red colored; seeds dull brown, enclosed in the pulpy aril. Crape jasmine blooms in spring but flowers appear sporadically all year. The waxy blossoms are white five-petaled pinwheels that are borne in small clusters on the stem tips. Flowers are commonly used in pooja in north India.

Medical properties:

If you have diseases of the eyes you can try juice squeezed out of the flower bud of nanthyavattom added with little amount of breast milk makes a good eye salve that can stop secretion of sticky pus in the eyes. Buds kept in clean water overnight may be used as a good eye wash. Chandni (Tabernaemontana divaricata syn. /Ervatamia corondria) based herbal formulations are also in use in treatment of hypotension. Healers are well aware of its different medicinal uses. They prepare many formulations and use it in treatment. By mixing, the Petals of Chandni and Gulab (Rosa indica) flowers in equal proportion you can prepare special combination, and use it in treatment of hypotension successfully. Many healers use the petals of Kusum (Carthamus tinctorius) for the same purpose.

Scientists discover conolidine that offers relief from pain:
Scientists have discovered an uncommon natural substance at the bark of a plant. It’s called conolidine and it’s been used for many years in traditional Chinese, Ayurvedic and Thai medicines, which processes the ability to offer relief from pain. The scientists who are from the Florida campus of The Scripps Research Institute are the first to completely examine in the laboratory the substance called conolidine. Conolidine
belongs to a larger class of natural products, called C5-nor stemmadenines, members of which have been described as opioid analgesics belonging to the same class of compounds as morphine and hydrocone.

The new discovery may provide an alternative to the regularly prescribed narcotic pain treatments, as the study revealed that synthetic conolidine is a potent analgesic, which is as effective as morphine in relieving inflammatory and acute pain with little or no side effects. Because conolidine is not an opioid, it might offer pain relief without complications like the development of dependence and nausea.

The plant where conolidine is gotten from is called the Tabernaemontana Divaricata, also referred to as crepe jasmine. The extracts from the leaves of the plant are said to have been used as an anti-inflammatory on woods while the root is chewed to relieve pain. Though they have not succeeded, the researchers are still trying to discover how conolidine relieves pain either through the brain or other medium. Although researchers are aware of the analgesic effects of similar compounds, it’s been difficult to investigate conolidine since there isn’t enough of it available from natural sources. It makes up just 0.00014% of the bark of *T. divaricata*. So, it showed few, if any, of the side effects associated with opioids. According to study researcher Laura Bohn of Scripps, "the lack of side effects makes it a very good candidate for development."

The study was published in Nature Chemistry.

This beautiful plant is also used to treat: headache, skin diseases, bleeding disorder, itching, and arthritis.

In treating all kinds of arthritis it is beneficial to make the cleaning of lymph system with the help of Licorice herb (Glycyrrhiza). It is scientifically proven that almost all joint problems are connected with the contamination of lymph together with its stagnation. But the cleaning should include the absorption of dirty lympha and then nourishing the body with minerals and vitamins.

**Ayurvedic properties:** Plant pacifies vitiated Vata and Pitta

Rasa: Katu, Tikta
Guna: Lakhu
Virya: Seeta
Vipaka: Katu

Useful parts: Root, Flowers, Latex.

44. Gurmar or "Sugar Killer"
Gymnema Sylvestre/ Gurmar/ Gurmari/ Meshashringi/ miracle fruit/Gymnema/ Australian cowplant

This herb grows wild in forests, jungles and thickets. It naturally grows in India, specifically in Bihar, Central India, Konkan, and Western Ghats. Meshasringa translates from Sanskrit as "ram's horn", a name given to the plant from the shape of its fruits. The Indian name Gumar or Gurmar literally means "Sugar Killer". It has been used safely for centuries in Ayurveda as part of the daily diet to help maintain healthy blood sugar levels. Gurmar stops sugar cravings. As per Ayurveda: The kapha (water) reducing property of Gurmar destroys the cravings for sugar. Gymnema Sylvestre came to be known as "destroyer of sugar" because in ancient times Ayurvedic physicians observed that chewing a few leaves of Gymnema sylvestre suppressed the taste of sugar, so it neutralizes the cravings for sweets. Gurmar strengthens the pancreas and has been traditionally used for those prone to diabetes. Gurmar increases insulin production by repairing or regenerating the pancreas cells, the site of insulin production.

For about 2,000 years, the people of India have enjoyed the health benefits of Gymnema Sylvestre. The rest of the world has just recently begun catching up in 1930. It is used today all over India for controlling blood sugar. Results from a number of studies conducted in London and India reveal that gymnema sylvestre extracts can help people suffering from type 2 diabetes by stimulating insulin secretion, raising insulin levels, and reducing blood sugar levels by preventing the liver from producing glucose. The King's College in London studied the herb in 2010 and found that gymnema sylvestre could improve the symptoms of type 2 diabetes by increasing the circulating levels of insulin and/or C-peptide.

From extract of the leaves were isolated glycosides known as gymnemic acids, atomic arrangement of Gymnemic acid molecules are similar to that of glucose molecules. Gymnemic Acid molecules fill the receptor locations on the taste buds thereby preventing activation of taste buds by sugar molecules present in the food, thus, curbing the sugar craving. This effect lasts up to about 2 hours. Similarly, Gymnemic acid molecules fill the receptor location in the absorptive external layers of the intestine thereby preventing the sugar molecules absorption by the intestine which results in low blood sugar level. Thus, Gymnemic acids have antidiabetic, antisweetener and anti-inflammatory activities.

In ancient India, it was one of the most important Ayurvedic medicines for diabetes. Ancient people extracted gymnema leaves and roots to cure many other kinds of health problems such as urinary troubles, gastric problems, stomachache, constipation, water retention, liver disease and eye diseases.

Recent studies only proved what ancient people in India already knew: that gymnema sylvestre has stimulating, laxative and diuretic properties; this herb is good in treating cough, sore eyes, and infections.

Another way of taking the leaves is in the form of powder, which gives out a pleasant aromatic fragrance. The powder is said to stimulate the heart, improve circulation, aid urination, and activate the uterus. An ancient tribe in Central India prepared a special herbal mix of gymnema sylvestre with other well-known herbs such as fenugreek, gurmar, arjuna, gokshura, harra and chitrak. They said the concoction is a powerful treatment for diabetes and other stress-related illnesses.

Today, herbalists, manufacturers, and users believe that there are more health benefits of gymnema sylvestre than just the treatment for diabetes. There are reported cases that the herb has regularly cured people from asthma, cough, bronchitis, conjunctivitis, constipation, dyspepsia, amenorrhea, fever and jaundice, as well as promote weight loss.

According to Ayurvedic medicine, the bitter gymnema has antipyretic, laxative, diuretic and tonic effects, that it could treat insect bites if applied externally. It is also said to
improve digestion, heart functions, and clean the urinary tract. It is also believed to lower cholesterol levels, fight obesity, treat hyperglycemia, liver diseases, and anemia.

Actions according to Ayurveda:

Kushtha Pranuta: Gurmar is useful in management of all skin diseases;
Meha Pranuta: Gurmar is useful in management of all metabolic disorders including Diabetes;
Deepana: Gurmar ignites digestive fire in stomach;
Sramsana: Gurmar helps in easy evacuation of impacted feces from rectum;
Krimi -Vrana-Vishapaham: Gurmar is useful in all infectious conditions.

Effect on Tridosha (Three bio humors):

Gurmar pacifies aggravated Kapha and Vata Dosha; so it is useful in management of diseases of Kapha/ Vata and Kapha-Vata origin.

Bio energetics:

Rasa (Taste) - Kashaya (Astringent); Tikta (Bitter)  
Guna (Characteristics) - Laghu (Light); Ruksha (Un- unctuous)  
Veerya (Potency) - Ushna (Hot)  
Vipaka (Post digestion effect) – Katu (Pungent)

Useful part: Leaves, Roots

Doses: Leaves powder 3-6gm; decoction of roots: 50-100ml. Or 1 capsule twice daily with meals. Allow several weeks for long lasting benefits. Natural products have a wholistic effect on the body and take time for absorption and results.

45. Many benefits of Fenugreek

Trigonella foenum-graecum

Fenugreek is a widely used herbal. This annual herbaceous plant thrives in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Egypt, Nepal, Morocco, Bangladesh and most especially, India. It is
commonly used as traditional herbal medicine, food, condiment and dye. There are very few known side effects of fenugreek. Also referred to as Methi, Greek hay or fenugreek. The tiny leaves are found to contain potassium, calcium, iron, vitamin C and vitamin K, also contains protein, niacin and diosgenin. Diosgenin is a compound that is similar to the female hormone, estrogen, which is why the herb is known to enlarge the breast in size and increase libido. Fenugreek also contains alkaloids, lysine, saponins and L-tryptophan. While it is used to lower cholesterol and blood sugar and cure skin inflammation, heartburn acid reflux, and fever, it is more widely accepted to detoxify the kidney and intestines and used to help lactating mothers produce breast milk. Taken as tea or food supplement capsule, fenugreek is known to increase breast milk production by 500 to 900 percent after only 24 hours of taking the herb. Although the scientific community is still not sure how fenugreek is doing this, lactating women who have little supply of milk are recommended to take fenugreek seed capsules, at least 500 milligrams, 3 times a day. Other benefits of this herb include healing of gastric inflammation, digestive disorders, tuberculosis, painful menstruation and skin diseases, and it may be taken to aid weight loss and, ironically, also fight anorexia. In India, it is believed that this herb can heal digestive problems, bronchial diseases, gout, and arthritis, and may be used as aphrodisiac. In China, traditional medicine men still use it to treat kidney problems, backaches, hernia, painful menstruation, painful testicles and edema of the legs. Besides its medicinal and therapeutic uses, fenugreek has been used and enjoyed as food for centuries. It is a popular ingredient for curry powder, pickles and pastes, which are widely loved in the Indian subcontinent. It is also boiled as tea and coffee, while its fresh leaves and sprouts are used as greens and flavoring. The dried leaves have a strong bitter taste and smell, which is why they are used only sparingly. In the West, fenugreek is used as artificial maple flavoring. Meanwhile, the seeds are very popular in making curry dishes. They are crushed, mashed or ground to make curry powders, curry pastes, oriental sauces, spice mixtures, pickles and chutneys. Fenugreek sprouts are also good for eating. “Bioactive compounds” in the herb are thought to stimulate hormone activity, possibly enhancing sexual performance in men. Just like the seeds, fenugreek leaves are quite medicinal. They are used traditionally in many South Asian countries to treat allergies, bronchitis, intestinal problems, emphysema, headache, lung infection, mucous congestion, and skin irritations, as well as control the levels of cholesterol and blood sugar. Some of the traditional uses of the fenugreek plant include treatment of fever, cold, asthma, ulcer, arthritis, sore throat, body pains, joint pains, menstrual pains, and testicular pains. It is also recognized to increase one’s libido. While still acknowledged only as traditional medicine, fenugreek leaves are now as widely used as fenugreek seeds as an effective health supplement for these purposes. As a lactation aide. Fenugreek is a well-known and widely accepted galactagogue, able to help nursing mothers produce as much as 900% more than their normal milk production. The diosgenin content of fenugreek is believed to be causing the increase of breast milk, as well as stimulating breast enlargement. Diosgenin is an estrogen-like compound that is present in fenugreek seeds. As a diabetic aide. Fenugreek has been found to control the level of sugar in blood and therefore reduces a diabetic’s need for insulin. A number of tests have proven this to be so, and patients have confessed to the effectiveness of fenugreek. However, there are a number of herbs that may be better in managing blood sugar level. Several human intervention trials demonstrated that the antidiabetic effects of fenugreek seeds ameliorate most metabolic symptoms associated with type-1 and type-2 diabetes in both humans and relevant animal models by reducing serum glucose
and improving glucose tolerance. Fenugreek is currently available commercially in encapsulated forms and is being prescribed as dietary supplements for the control of hypercholesterolemia and diabetes by practitioners of complementary and alternative medicine. Fenugreek contains high dietary fiber, so a few seeds taken with warm water before going to sleep helps avoiding constipation.

**As a cholesterol inhibitor.** Studies also have proven this herb’s ability to lower cholesterol levels.

**Arthritis** has a low incidence rate in India where a lot of fenugreek is consumed. Drinking 1 cup of fenugreek tea per day, made from the leaves, is said to relieve the discomfort of arthritis. In India about 2-3g of raw fenugreek seeds (called Methi in India) are swallowed raw early in the morning with warm water, before brushing the teeth and before drinking tea or coffee, where they are supposed to have a therapeutic and healing effect on joint pains, without any side effects.

**Almost no side effects:**
More importantly, fenugreek has no side effects immediately apparent. Even the US Food and Drug Administration believes that it is one of the safest medicinal herbs. The only identified side effects are diarrhea and nausea, and that it makes a user’s sweat and urine smell like maple, which is not really a bad thing. It is not recommended to pregnant women, however, as it may induce labor.

A hundred grams of fenugreek a day is enough. People with asthma, allergies or diabetes should also avoid taking too much fenugreek. At any rate, people should first consult a physician before taking herbal supplements.

46. Goji Berry - an incredible prolonger of life

**Goji Berries**

![Goji Berries](image)

**Fresh** and **Dried**

*Lycium barbarum/* Wolfberry/* Murali*

Wolfberry, commercially called *goji berry*, is the common name for the fruit of two very closely related species: *Lycium barbarum* and *L. chinense*, which is native to certain remote regions of China, Tibet, and Mongolia. It is also known as *Chinese wolfberry*, *mede berry*, *barbary matrimony vine*, *bocksdorn*, *Duke of Argyll’s tea tree*, *Murali* (in India), *red medlar*, or *matrimony vine*. Unrelated to the plant's geographic origin, the names Tibetan goji and Himalayan goji are in common use in the health food market for products from this plant.

Goji berry have played a central role in **Chinese medicine** for thousands of years, there is even an unsupported myth that a Chinese man named Li Qing Yuen, who was said to have consumed wolfberries daily, lived to the age of 252 years (1678–1930).

Since the early 21st century there has been rapidly growing attention for wolfberries for their nutrient value and antioxidant content. They have been termed a superfruit. Like
the acai (from assai palm tree) berries, goji berries and other types of wolfberries have been found to be incredibly advantageous and they are known to have a number of health benefits. Wolfberries are usually sold in open boxes and small packages in dried form, because these berries can’t be eaten from tree, as they are poisonous. Under careful scrutiny, scientists have found the Goji Berry to be one of the most nutritionally dense fruits on earth. Here are the main nutrients found in the Goji Berry that makes it such a potent wellness agent.

- **Goji Berries** contain special polysaccharides which fortify your immune system and are responsible for controlling your body's most important defense systems. Scientists attribute most of goji's amazing health properties to these special polysaccharides.

- **Goji Berries** contain 19 amino acids - the building blocks of protein--including all eight essential for life - no other plant can make that claim!

- **Goji berries** are a better source of Vitamin C than oranges (500 times more vitamin C)!

- **Goji Berries** contain complete spectrum of antioxidant carotenoids, including beta-carotene and zeaxanthin, which supports the eyes. Goji berries are the best source of carotenoids of known foods.

- **Goji berries** also have other nutrients like calcium, potassium, iron (15 times more than in spinach), zinc, selenium, riboflavin, vitamin C, beta-carotene, zeaxanthin and Polysaccharides.

Goji berries are known as the "longevity fruit". Their antioxidant properties and beneficial effects of a complex of unique polysaccharides protect the body from premature aging, increase the body's resistance to external harmful influences. It was noted that goji berries can stimulate the production of growth hormone anterior pituitary gland. This hormone is also called the "hormone of youth". He is responsible for improving memory, libido, and helps in the healing and recovery from disease, normalizes sleep and reduces the amount of fat in the body and helps us to maintain a youthful appearance as long as possible. In addition, the hormone responsible for many important functions of conservation, restoration and development, for example, the production of smooth muscle tissue and the penetration of calcium in teeth and bone tissue.

In China, Goji berries have long been used in the treatment of diabetes at an early stage. Complex polysaccharides, which are not found together in any plant on earth, balances blood sugar levels and response to insulin. Betaine which contains in Goji berries, can prevent liver obesity and vascular injury, which is so often seen in diabetics.

So, I would like to make a little summary about this incredible nature’s gift: Dr. E Mindell, was studying these berries for a long time and has released a book that is called "33 reasons why you should eat Goji daily". According to scientists, Goji berries prolong life, gives energy, rejuvenate the body, normalize blood pressure, reduce the risk of cancer, lower cholesterol, normalize blood sugar levels, improve sexual performance, help reduce weight, improve sleep, strengthen the heart, normalize vision increase resistance to disease, improve the blood and treat disorders of the bone marrow, supporting the liver and kidneys, restore hormonal balance and helps in the treatment of infertility, strengthen muscles and bones, improve memory and relieve stress...

**Possible Side Effects of Goji Berries:**

There have been rare cases of people reporting complications when goji berries were used with warfarin which is a blood thinning agent. This is a possible herb drug interaction that can be dangerous at times. These berries are also contraindicated in people who take diabetes medications and hypertension medications. Allergies can also be a possible problem with goji berries. But usually these berries are safe if taken in moderate to small amounts.
Wolfberries contain many nutrients and phytochemicals including:

- 11 essential and 22 trace dietary minerals
- 18 amino acids
- 6 essential vitamins
- 8 polysaccharides and 6 monosaccharides
- 5 unsaturated fatty acids, including the essential fatty acids, linoleic acid and alpha-linoleic acid
- beta-sitosterol and other phytosterols
- 5 carotenoids including beta-carotene and zeaxanthin (below) lutein, lycopene and cryptoxanthin, a xanthophyll
- numerous phenolic pigments (phenols) associated with antioxidant properties

Select examples given below are for 100 grams of dried berries.

- **Calcium.** Wolfberries contain 112 mg per 100 gram serving, providing about 8-10% of the Dietary Reference Intake (DRI).
- **Potassium.** Wolfberries contain 1,132 mg per 100 grams dried fruit, giving about 24% of the DRI.
- **Iron.** Wolfberries have 9 mg iron per 100 grams (100% DRI).
- **Zinc.** 2 mg per 100 grams dried fruit (18% DRI).
- **Selenium.** 100 grams of dried wolfberries contain 50 micrograms (91% DRI).
- **Riboflavin (Vitamin B2)** At 1.3 mg, 100 grams of dried wolfberries provide 100% of DRI.
- **Vitamin C** content in dried wolfberries has a wide range (from different sources from 29 mg per 100 grams to as high as 148 mg per 100 grams (respectively, 32% and 163% DRI).

- **Beta-carotene:** 7 mg per 100 grams dried fruit.
- **Zeaxanthin:** Reported values for zeaxanthin content in dried wolfberries vary considerably, from 2.4 mg per 100 grams to 82.4 mg per 100 grams to 200 mg per 100 grams. The higher values would make wolfberry one of the richest edible plant sources known for zeaxanthin content. Up to 77% of total carotenoids present in wolfberry exist as zeaxanthin.
- **Polysaccharides** are a major constituent of wolfberries, representing up to 31% of pulp weight.

   Let this unique super-berry gives us bright and healthy future!