

**Botanic name :** *Hygrophila schulli* M.R.Almeida & S.M.Almeida -- J. Bombay Nat. Hist. Soc. 83(Suppl.): 221. 1987 ; nom. illeg. (IK)

**Common name :** Indian Cuckoo, Ikshura, Ikshagandha and Kokilasha (Ayurveda)

**Family :** Acanthaceae

**Habitat :** Terrestrial

**Distribution :** Native to tropical Asia and Africa; widely distributed throughout India, Sri Lanka, Burma, Malaysia and Nepal.

**Description :** An erect, stout, branched or unbranched, annual herb; stem is roughly four angled, reddish brown; leaves occur in whorls, the outer pair of leaves is larger, lanceolate, scabrous, minutely dentate at margins, subsessile, thorns strong straight or curved; flowers occur in axillary whorls, bract and bracteoles leafy; calyx four lobed, lobes unequal; corolla unequally 2- lipped, middle lobe of the lower lip with yellow palate; corolla purple coloured; stamens - four, in two pair, filaments unequal; anthers divergent; ovary two celled; four ovules in each cell; fruit a dehiscent capsule

**Phytochemicals:** Alkaloids, steroids, flavonoids, triterpenoids, tannins and saponins phytosterols, essential oils, lupeol, stigmasterol, asterol I-IV, asteracanthine, apigenin glucuronide, seeds oil (palmitic, stearic, oleic etc.)

**Medicinal/Economic uses :** Leaves and roots have diuretic properties. Bacteriostatic (essential oil from the roots), demulcent and diuretic (seeds), tonic, aphrodisiac, hypnotic (leaves). antioxidant, hepatoprotective, hypoglycemic, haematinic, diuretic, free radical scavenging, anthelmintic, anti-inflammatory, antipyretic, anabolic and androgenic (whole plant). The herb is also useful in ailments of the urinogenital tract, like dysuria, urinary calculi, cystitis, diarrhea, dysentery, cough, joint pain, blennorrhoea, hydrophy, anuria, as well as catarrh, stomach ache, crawl-crawl. The seeds are known to increase libido and are beneficial in treating spermatorrhoea. The whole plant, or its ashes, and the roots are used as a cooling medicine and diuretic in cases of hepatic obstruction, dropsy, and rheumatism. Edible-Young leaves are chopped and cooked alone, or are combined with other vegetables such as peas or amaranth. Coconut milk or groundnut paste is then added and the dish is served with a staple such as rice