

Botanic Name: *Bauhinia divaricata* hort. ex Steud. -- Nomencl. Bot. [Steudel], ed. 2. 1: 191 (err. typ. 291). 1840 (IK)

Common Name: Kachnar, Orchid Tree, Varigated Bauhinia

Family: Fabaceae (Leguminosae)

Habitat: Terrestrial tree

Distribution: Native to India and China , extended mainly in the Himalayan region of 1300 m extending eastward into Assam, eastern central and southern India.

Description: A small tree of 20-40 ft tall and 10-20 ft wide with a spreading crown of briefly deciduous leaves which rounded with lobed ends and heart shaped bases. The leaves are shaped a little like a cow's hoof. The flowers looks like showy orchids, with five irregular, usually slightly overlapping petals of various colours like magenta, lavender, purplish blue or even white. Produces brown legume.

Phytochemicals : Flavonoids, steroids, terpenoids, tannins, lactones, glycolipids, glycosyl steroids and quinines. Five flavonoids isolated from the different parts of Bauhinia has been identified as quercetin, rutin, apigenin and apigenin 7-O-glucoside. Bioactive compounds include astragalin, bauhinoside, beta-sitosterol, flavonols, flavonoids, glycosides, guanidine, heteroglycosides, kaempferitrin, organic acids, quercitrosides, rhamnase, and saponins

Medicinal/Economic uses: Antidiabetic, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, analgesic, astringent and diuretic. Kaempferitrin, a flavonoid, has been shown to significantly lower blood sugar levels, to have diuretic activity and to help repair kidney cell damage. Used to treat leprosy, menorrhagia, impurities of blood, tuberculous gland, wound, ulcers and asthma etc. The leaves are anticholesterolemic, blood purifier, diuretic, hypoglycaemic and tonic. Along with *B. forticata*, the leaves of *B. divaricata* are used to treat central nervous system disorders, diarrhoea, elephantiasis, intestinal worms, leprosy, obesity, skin disorders, snakebite and syphilis. Used as ornamental tree in railway premises, parks, and gardens