

**Botanic name:** *Scoparia dulcis* L -- Sp. Pl. 1: 116. 1753 [1 May 1753] (IK)

**Common name:** Licorice weed, Sweet Broom Weed, Bon dhonya (Bengali),

**Family:** Scrophulariaceae

**Habitat:** Terrestrial

**Distribution:** Native in Tropical America; naturalized throughout India

**Description:** Erect, annual or perennial herbs. Leaves decussate to whorled, -oblong, base attenuate, margin crenate-serrate, apex acute, penninerved, punctate, chartaceous; petiolate; flowers axillary, solitary or 2, white; pedicelled Calyx lobes -, ovate-oblong, ciliate along margin; corolla, rotate, semi-regular, throat densely hairy, lobes spathulate. Stamens 4, subequal; vary globose, 2-celled; ovules many; stigma truncate, fruit-capsules, ovoid or rounded

**Phytochemicals:** Alkaloids, flavonoids, a flavone glycoside, quinine, phenols, terpenoids, tannins, coparic acid A, B, and C, scopadulic acid A & B, scopadulin, scoparinol, friedelin and glutinol, and saponins. The aerial parts contain about 4% of a viscous oil which, besides fatty acids like stearic, myristic and linolenic acid, Scopadulcic acid B, also contains a series of diterpenes like scopadulin. The fresh stems and leaves contain a compound called amellin

**Medicinal/ Economic uses:** Used to treat digestive problems, pulmonary complaints, fevers, cough (fresh leaf-they first taste bitter and later sweet, like liquorice) and skin disorders. The plant is seen as an antibilious, antidiabetic, antitumor, antibiotic, antidote, aphrodisiac, bitter, blood purifier, emetic, febrifuge, antiviral (herpes simplex virus), hepatic, neuroprotective, hypoglycaemic, and traditionally used to treat cough, bronchitis, hypertension, haemorrhoids and insect bites in India, Indo-China and South-East Asia, and helpful in anaemia, albuminuria, ketonuria, retinitis and other complications associated with diabetes mellitus. The whole plant is used for treating a wide range of disorders including diabetes, herpes, coughs and colds, fevers, nausea, dizziness, and as an antidote for snakebites and cassava intoxication. In low doses, often in milk, it is used to relieve vomiting in infants, whilst in larger doses it is used to induce vomiting to clear out the digestive system. A decoction of the plant is drunk as a treatment for remittent fever and gonorrhoea, and also to induce labour. A cold decoction of the plant is taken as a remedy for gravel and kidney complaints. The bushy stems are much used to make temporary brooms for sweeping floors to destroy fleas

