

Botanic name : *Primula vulgaris* Hill-- Herb. Brit. ii. 193. (IK) [*P. acaulis* (L.) Hill]

Common name: Common primrose

Family: Primulaceae

Habitat: Terrestrial

Distribution : Native to western and southern Europe (from the Faroe Island and Norway south to Portugal, and east to Germany, Ukraine, the Crimea, and the Balkans), northwest Africa (Algeria), and southwest Asia (Turkey east to Iran). Introduced in India, almost half of the known species are from the Himalayas.

Description: A perennial hemicryptophyte herb, with a basal rosette of leaves, often heavily wrinkled, lamina oblanceolate to obovate, rounded at apex, gradually tapering at the base into the petiole, irregularly erose-denticulate to crenate at the margin, membranous in texture, glabrous above, with impressed veins; inflorescence solitary, axillary; The flowers are typically pale yellow, though white or pink, a dark yellow spot present at the base of each petal, heteromorphic; two kinds of flowers, externally apparently identical, but inwardly of different construction. Only one kind is found on each plant, never both, one kind being known as 'pin-eyed' and the other as 'thrum-eyed.' In both, the green-tubed calyx and the pale yellow corolla of five petals, joined into a tube below and spreading into a disk above are identical, but in the centre of the pin-eyed flowers there is only the green knob of the stigma, looking like a pin's head, whereas in the centre of the thrum-eyed flowers there are five anthers, in a ring round the tube, but no central knob. Farther down the tube, there are in the pin-eyed flowers five anthers hanging on to the wall of the corolla tube, while in the thrum-eyed, at this same spot, is the stigma knob. Corolla pale yellow with dull diffuse orange marks at the base of each petal, annulate or exannulate, heteromorphic; tube as long as or a little longer than the calyx, cylindrical, becoming slightly wider above the insertion of the stamens, limb 2–4 cm in diameter with patent overlapping lobes. At the bottom of the tube in both alike is the seed-case and round it the honey; stamens prominent; fruit-capsule, open by valves, seeds small, black.

Phytochemicals: Saponins, fragrant oil and primulin

Medicinal/Economic use : The herb has a long history of its medicinal uses in India and other countries, particularly for cramps, spasms, paralysis and rheumatic pains. An ointment has been made from the plant and used for treating skin wounds. It is used mostly today as an expectorant (due to saponins) and tonic to the respiratory & nervous system. It also contains salicylates which are the main ingredient of aspirin and have anodyne, anti inflammatory and febrifuge effects. The roots and the flowering herb are anodyne, antispasmodic, astringent, emetic, sedative and vermifuge. An infusion of the roots is a good remedy against nervous headaches. Young leaves raw or cooked are edible. Both the flowers and leaves are prepared in syrup or tea. Ornamental in many homestead in Indian Himalayan states like Sikkim, Arunachal, and Jammu and Kashmir. The herb is extremely significant in plant genetics and molecular biology research. More read: Jacquemyn et al. (2009). J Ecol 97: 812-833.