

Botanic name: *Calamintha umbrosa* (M. Bieb.) Rchb.

[syn. *Clinopodium umbrosum* (M.Bieb.) Kuntze]

Common name: Shady calamint, Birchee (Hindi), Bilajor (Darjeeling)

Family: Lamiaceae

Habitat: Terrestrial

Distribution: Native to Indian Himalayas (1000-3400m); distributed Afganistan to SE Asia. Extensively exploited due to its aromatic oil having medicinal & commercial pharmacological values

Description: Softly, hairy perennial aromatic herb/undershrub with 1-3ft height, 4-angled stem; leaves thin-textured, ovate, sub-sessile, sharply toothed margin, rounded at base, acute above, sparingly pilose especially on veins beneath, with or without scattered sessile oil globules; flowers small, pink or purple arranged in lax-few-flowered whorls (verticillaster), bracts, unequal sepals with bristle hairy; corolla 2-lipped, upper lip deflexed; stamens didynamous (2+2), epipetalous, protruding; styles gynobasic; fruits cercerule.

Phytochemicals: Essential oils-carvone (38.7%), followed by *neo*-dihydrocarveol (9.9%), dihydrocarveol acetate (7.6%), dihydrocarveol (6.9%), 1,8 cineole (6.4%), *cis*-carvyl acetate (6.1%), and pulegone (4.1%). camphoraceous, volatile, stimulating oil

Medicinal/economical value: Aromatic, antibacterial, diaphoretic, expectorant, febrifuge, antidiabetic and stomachic. In Nepal and Indian Himalayas, juice of the leaves used in cuts and wounds; antimicrobial and antioxidant, eaten as vegetables for good health (Darjeeling hills, West Bengal, India). An infusion is beneficial in cases of flatulent colic and weaknesses of the stomach, also used to treat depression, insomnia and painful menstruation. It should not be prescribed for pregnant women since in excess it can cause a miscarriage.