

**Botanic name :** *Argemone mexicana* L. -- Sp. Pl. 1: 508. 1753 [1 May 1753] (IK)

**Common name :** Mexican Prickly Poppy, 'Sialkanta' (Bengali), Katu Parni – leaves have astringent taste

**Family :** Papaveraceae

**Habitat :** Terrestrial

**Distribution :** Native to Mexico, Central and parts of tropical America; introduced as alien exotic obnoxious weed in pantropics (agricultural land and wastelands), including Indian Subcontinent and Africa where it becomes invasive suppressing growth and habitat of native species by allelopathic effects, and tolerating high range of extreme environmental stress, inflicting social, environmental, and economic loss

**Description :** An annual prickly branched herb with yellow juice; leaves thistlelike, alternate, clasping with stem, oblong, multiple cut, shiny, pale bluish-green and exudes an unpleasant-smelling yellow sap when cut; with acute spine like at apex, while in vein, deeply lobed with irregularly toothed, spiny margins; flowers yellow, solitary, subtended by 1-2 leafy bracts; sepals 3, prickly; petals 4-6, yellow to pale orange, glabrous; stamens numerous; fruits capsule; seeds dark brownish black colored, numerous, globose and netted

**Phytochemicals:**  $\alpha$  &  $\beta$  allocryptopines, codeine, paveramine, narcotine, papaverine, papaverosin, chelidoxanthin, glaucopicrin (Important bitter principles), isorhamnetion (flowers), essential oil (seed) known as agremone oil, berberine and protopine (resin)

**Medicinal/Economic uses :** Natural purgative (Virechana Panchakarma in Indian Ayurveda), blood detoxifier (root juice), antimalarial (root juice), antibacterial, analgesic, anti-inflammatory, and allelopathic. Different Ayurvedic (Indian) preparations are useful in blood disorders such as abscess, skin disorders, bleeding disorders such as menorrhagia, nasal bleeding, heavy periods, dysuria, urinary retention, Kidney and bladder stones, inflammation, burning sensation, as in gastritis, neuropathy, burning sensation in eyes, fever, itching, pruritis, bloating, fullness, Jaundice, liver diseases, scorpion and insect bites, to relieve arthritis pain, useful in constipation, flatulence, abdominal colic (root and seed oil). Side effects: Adulterants with black mustard. Argemone oil in edible mustard oil is reported frequently responsible for out breaks and epidemic dropsy. Also, are not suitable during pregnancy, lactation and in children.