

Botanic name: *Hedera nepalensis* K.Koch -- Hort. Dendrol. 284, No. 5. 1854 (IK)

Common name: Nepal Ivy, 'Kurrai'-Western Himalayas (India)

Family: Araliaceae (Ginseng Family)

Habitat: Terrestrial-Climber

Distribution: Found in the Himalayas' from Afghanistan to Nepal, India, SW China and Burma. Unsustainable exploitation, natural disasters like earthquake, and habitat degradation are leading to gradual dwindling of its occurrence

Description: Evergreen, woody climber, climbing into tall trees by aerial roots; leaves ovate to lanceolate to variously lobed, leathery, dark-green, glossy, ivy-like, subacute to obtuse at apex, cordate to rounded to cuneate at base; flowers tiny, many, yellowish-green, in stalked spherical umbel-arranged in domed clusters, the petals are placed edge-to-edge; fruit a berry, round.

Phytochemicals: Flavonoids, steroids, tannins, saponins, terpenoids, lupeol and cardiac glycosides; leaves and fruits contain the saponic glycoside hederagenin; triterpenoid saponin; nepalenside A and triterpenoid saponins colchiside A, pastuchoside A, helixoside A and kizuta saponin K12 from the leaves

Medicinal/ Economic uses: Hypoglycemic, cytotoxic, febrifuge, antioxidant and anticancer (lupeol). Traditionally, leaves and berries are used as stimulating, diaphoretic, cathartic, and to treat indolent ulcers and abscesses. Dried branches and leaves are ground and the powder is used early in the morning with water against diabetes (Chamba valley, India). A decoction of the leaves is effective against lice and skin infection. Juice from leaves for curing diabetes, also considered as blood purifier and anticancer (Swat valley, Pakistan). Also found to be effective against pulmonary infections and rheumatism. Leaves are considered as tonic fodder for cattle