

Botanic name : *Adhatoda vasica* Nees. -- Pl. Asiat. Rar. (Wallich). iii. 103. (IK)

[syn. *Justicia adhatoda* L.]

Common name: Malabar Nut, Vasaka

Family : Acanthaceae

Habitat: Terrestrial

Distribution: Plains of India in wild condition and is cultivated in a small scale in village shrubberies. Also found in Bangladesh, Burma, Malaya, Indonesia, Malaysia, Panama, Nepal, China, Sri Lanka

Description: Leaves opposite, elliptic, acuminate, entire, petiolate, glabrous afterwards. Inflorescence a dense terminal spike or a fascicle at the axil of upper leaves, bracteate, bracteolate. Flowers sub sessile, bisexual, zygomorphic, hypogynous, covered with bracts and bracteolates, arranged in terminal or axillary spikes; calyx shortly campanulate; corolla bilabiate, white with pinkish violet tinge, upper lip ovate-oblong, notched at the middle, lower lip oblong with rounded tip and 3-lobed, lips of corolla imbricate; stamens 2, filaments hairy, anthers 2-lobed oblong, minutely apiculate, one lobe little higher up than the other; ovary bicarpellary syncarpous, 2-celled, superior, 2 ovules in each cell, style filiform, subclavate above, stigma entire; fruit a clavate capsule upto 2 cm. long, contracted below into a solid stipe. Seeds 1 or 2, sub orbicular, compressed, glabrous and rugose

Phytochemical content : Rich in alkaloid vasicine, adhatodic acid, quinazoline alkaloid (vasicine), l-vasicinone, deoxyvasicine, maiontone, vasicinolone and vasicinol

Medicinal Uses: An important Indian Ayurvedic herb; known for its antispasmodic, expectorant, anti-pyretic, anti-diarrheal, hepato-protective, uterine-stimulator (Vasicine), abortifacient, anthelmintic, anti-allergic and blood-purifying qualities. Powder of dry leaves is used to treat cough and cold. Plant parts are used to treat multitude of disorders including leprosy, tumors, urinary tract infection, burning sensation, high blood pressure, skin pigmentation, asthma, bleeding gums, blood disorders, vomiting, loss of memory, indigestion, heart troubles, fever, leucoderma, jaundice, excessive bleeding, mouth troubles, whooping cough, sore-eye, and gonorrhoea. Used in the treatment of asthma in the form of a liquid extract in alcohol or freshly expressed juice. Plant alkaloids makes it very effective in getting rid of the phlegm (in fact all cold related diseases) and it also treats indigestion, skin diseases and excessive bleeding. Vasaka leaf tea is helpful in bronchial distress. Leaf infusion helps kill white ants, flies and mosquitoes (insecticide). Leaf juice mixed with honey can relieve constipation. Plant juice also helps to excrete biles and bilirubin (cholagogue), relieves wounds, and quenches thirst. *Adhatoda* is avoided by pregnant ladies and very young babies.