

**Botanic name :** *Polygonum hydropiper* (L.)Delabre

**Family:** Polygonaceae

**Common name:** Water pepper

**Habitat:** Terrestrial

**Distribution:** Found in the Himalayas, up to altitudes of 900-2300 m. It is also found in other parts of India

**Description:** Annual herb with an erect stem, leaves are alternate and almost stalkless. The leaf blades are narrowly ovate and have entire margins fringed by very short hairs. They are tapering with a blunt apex. Each leaf base has stipules which are fused into a stem-enclosing sheath that is loose and fringed at the upper end (ochreate). The inflorescence is a nodding spike. The perianth of each tiny flower consists of four or five segments, united near its green base and white or pink at the edges. There are six stamens, three fused carpels and three styles. Fruit-a dark brown oval, flattened nut, placentation basal.

**Phytochemicals:** Flavonoids, drimane-type sesquiterpenes and sesquiterpenoids, phenylpropanoids.

**Medicinal/Economic uses:** antioxidant, antibacterial, antifungal, antihelminth, antifeedant, cytotoxicity, anti-inflammatory, antinociceptive, oestrogenicity, antifertility, antiadipogenicity, and neuroprotection. Used as Stimulant, diuretic, diaphoretic, emmenagogue, efficacious in amenorrhoea. A cold water infusion is useful in gravel, colds and coughs.

In India, the Mishing women in Assam use the dried root powder for termination of pregnancy and it may lead to permanent sterility by one year of continuous intake. In Arunachal Pradesh, India the whole plant extract and ground plant paste are used as fish poisons, while the leaf infusion is employed to relieve colic pain. Garo tribe in Meghalaya, India uses leaf juice for menstrual pain, the leaf paste to stop bleeding, and the whole plant as pesticide for stored grains. The leaf juice has been given in problems like headache, pain, toothache, liver enlargement, gastric ulcer, dysentery, loss of appetite, and dysmenorrhea, while the roots are used as stimulant and their juice is applied to wounds, skin diseases, and painful carbuncles. has also been utilized as natural dye. A hot decoction made from the whole plant has been used in America as a remedy for cholera. Also used as diuretic, anthelmintic, carminative, tonic (Vietnam, China).