

Botanic name : *Barleria prionitis* L.

Common name : 'Vajradanti' (Sanskrit), Kantajati (Bengali),

Family : Acanthaceae

Habitat : Terrestrial

Distribution : Native to temperate-tropical Asia and Africa; distributed in India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Africa, China, Yemen

Description : A spiny, erect, perennial, bushy, undershrub with glabrous, swollen nodes, young stem which is grey, slightly four angled, usually with 3-4 divaricate spines at axil of leaf; stem externally greyish to light brown; leaves oval-ellipsoid shaped; variable in size, simple, acuminate at apex, entire at margin, acute at apex, unicostate reticulate venation, glabrous above, glabrous or pubescent/ spiny beneath; flowers tubular yellow–orange, with protruding stamens, sessile, often solitary axillary, becoming spicate above; bracts foliaceous, oblong or lanceolate, bristle-tipped; bracteoles 1.3 cm long, narrowly linear, subulate (almost spinous), bristle-tipped; stamens 2 fertile + 2 staminodes; fertile filament exerted beyond the corona tube, those of the staminode very short. Ovary superior of two fused carpels; fruits capsule-oval-shaped

Phytochemicals: β -Sitosterol, Potassium, Barlerin, Scutellareing-g-rhamnosyl glucoside, Irioids, Barterin and Acetyl barlerin; neutral and acid resins

Medicinal/Economic uses : Grown as an ornamental and medicinal plant in Asia, the plant is extensively used in Ayurveda and Indian phytopharmacology for dental care, skin allergy, asthma, anasarca (generalized edema), body pains, hair graying, spermatogenesis, otitis (leaf juice), ring worm infection, boils, cracked feet, eczema, itching, acute-chronic rheumatism and inflammatory condition of joints. Sanskrit name Vajradanti, literally means one which makes Danta (teeth) as hard as Vajra(diamond). The leaves are boiled with Kattha and used for rinsing mouth to stop bleeding from gums and makes teeth strong. It balances Kapha, and destroys poison and is especially useful in dental problems and gout and also in acute and chronic congestion of the liver, urinary, jaundice and paralytic affections and in cardiac, renal and hepatic dropsy. The plant is reportedly useful as anticatarrhal, antirheumatic, antiseptic, anti-inflammatory, appetizer, astringents, cholagogue, diaphoretic, emollient, diuretic, thermogenic and expectorant.