

LESS KNOWN USES OF WEEDS AS MEDICINAL PLANTS**T. R. SAHU***Department of Botany, Doctor Harisingh Gour Vishwavidyalaya, Sagar 470 003, India.***Received: July 27, 1983****Accepted: August 30, 1983**

ABSTRACT: *In this paper the author presents medicinal or otherwise useful weed species with details of family, vernacular name and its medicinal utility. Information on other general economic importance of medicinal weeds is also described here.*

The weed are a serious problem in agriculture and tremendously reduce the productivity of agricultural trends by competing with crop plants for water, mineral nutrients, space and light. The induction of new, high yielding varieties of crops, which require comparatively larger amount of water and fertilizers, has its bearing on the agronomic practices too. Under the favourable conditions of high fertility and abundant soil moisture the chances for luxuriant growth of weed have also increased. Weeds are now widely regarded as pests of crop because they lower the yield, increase the cost of production in various ways.

The weeds are supposed to be the great hazard to the cultivated crops like vegetables and the losses due to these are more than either diseases or insects. The eradication of these weeds is necessary to get a maximum yield from the crop. Earlier studies on weed control have largely shown that there is no substitute for chemicalisation to control weeds, however, the increasing use of chemical weed control in vegetable crops, effect the nutritive values of vegetables. To overcome this problem to some extent, it is proposed to use these weeds instead of

throwing them. Keeping this in view such losses can be compensated by exploring the medicinal utility of such weeds.

Abutilon indicum (Linn.) Sweet (Malvaceae)
'Tapari'

Infusion of roots is used orally in chronic fever. A poultice of leaves is applied on boils and ulcers. The leaf decoction is given in bronchitis, diarrhoea, gonorrhoea, urethritis and fever.

Acalypha indica Linn. (Euphorbiaceae)
'Kuppi'

The whole plant is useful in bronchitis asthma, pneumonia and rheumatism.

Achyranthes aspara Linn. (Amaranthaceae)
'Adhajhara'

The root paste is given for easily delivery. It is also given with cold water to stop bleeding after abortion. Root paste is applied externally in scorpion sting. Extract of leaves is externally massed in sciatica. Crushes leaves externally used on old boils and also applied over insect bite. Children suffering from fever are given a bath in the

decoction of the whole plant. A parasite found in the root is taken with milk and sugar to cure chronic fever and catarrh.

The ash of the plant is rich in potash and used for washing clothes. The leaves are used as a pot herb.

Adhatoda vasica Nees (Acanthaceae)
'Adusa'

Juice of the leaves is an expectorant. It softens the thick sputum and thus brings about quick relief in bronchitis.

Leaves are used in packing or storing fruits as they are not easily attacked by fungi and insects. They are also utilized for obtaining a yellow dye.

Ageratum conyzoides Linn. (Asteraceae)
'Ajpganda'

The leaf paste acts as an antiseptic and is applied in fresh cuts to stop bleeding. The leaf juice with the 'Nim Oil' is externally applied in skin diseases. An infusion of the seeds is given as a tonic in diarrhoea and flatulent colic. The juice is used in prolapse of the anus.

Alternanthera sessilis DC (Amaranthaceae)

Whole plant is externally used in snake bite. Extract of plant is taken in dysentery. *Andrographis paniculara* (Burm. f.) Wall ex. Nees (Acanthaceae) 'Chiretta'.

Extract of whole plant is useful in curing fever, worms, dysentery, dyspepsia and liver disorders. Extract of leaves is taken in stomach trouble. The tribals of Baster region pound the plant in sarson oil and used to check itching.

Amaranthus spinosus Linn.
(Amaranthaceae) 'Kateli Chourai'

Extract of root is externally used for ripening of boils. Roots are externally used in eczema.

Leaves are used as vegetable. The ash of plants is used in dyeing.

Ammania baccifera Linn. (Lythraceae)

Dried leaves are added to 'pan' (beetle leaf) and are given for the treatment of venereal diseases.

Argemone Mexicana Linn. (Papaveraceae)
'Pelikatai'.

A decoction of the root is an eye wash, a mouth wash and a lotion for inflammatory swelling. Yellow sap from the stem is used in conjunctivitis. Juice of the leaves is given in dropsy, jaundice, skin diseases and gonorrhoea. Seeds are given in cough, catarrhal affections, asthma and whooping cough. Seeds made into paste with 'sarson oil' is used in eczema, scabies and measles.

The oil extract of the seeds is used as a luminant, lubricant and in soap industry. The oil cake is useful as a fertilizer.

Bacopa monnieri (Linn). Pennell
(Scrophulariaceae) 'Jalneem'

Leaves are taken in chronic fever and also to improve memory and as a tonic for nervous disorder. A poultice made of the boiled plant is placed on the chest of children suffering from cough.

Barleria cristata Linn. (Acanthaceae).

A decoction of the root is *Barleria strigosa* and dry fish is given in anaemia. Leaves

and root are used against cough and bronchitis. The seeds are regarded as an antitode for snake bites.

Barleria prionitis Linn. (Acanthaceae)

The paste of the roots and leaves is applied to disperse boils and swellings. It is also used to relieve tooth-ache. The juice of bark is given in dropsy.

Biophytum sensitivum (Linn.) D C. (Oxalidaceae)

A paste of about 20 – 30 plants is given twice or thrice daily with milk to allay body heat caused by some excitement.

Blumea lacera DC. (Asteraceae).

Crushed leaves are externally used on boils, wounds and blisters. Juice of the plant mixed with sugar is taken in cold.

Blumea membranacea DC (Asteraceae).

The plant juice is used to relieve body pain.

Boerhaavia diffusa Linn. (Nyctaginaceae) 'Patharchata'.

The paste of root made after boiling it with soap and salt is externally used for ripening of boils. It is also used in gonorrhoea, to promote urination in dropsy for extracting 'Guinea – worms' and in heart and kidney diseases. The leaves are cooked without salt and given to the liver complaints particularly to patients suffering from jaundice.

Bryophyllus pinnatum (Lamk) Oken (crassulaceae).

The plant – paste is applied to forehead to relieve headache.

Calotropis procera (Ait.) R. Br. (Asclepiadaceae) 'Madar'

Root bark paste is applied on elephantiasis. A poultice of roasted leaves is applied to inflammatory swelling and rheumatic joints. The latex of plant is used in dropsy, tuchia, leprosy, etc. Powdered flowers with black pepper and ash of barley seeds are mixed together and given orally in rose water during cholera.

It yields one of the strongest and valuable fibre used for making sewing thread, carpets, ropes and fishing nets etc. the charcoal made from the wood is used in gun powder, and fire works. The cema (silky thread from the seed) is used for stuffing pillows.

Cannabis sativa Linn. (Cannabinaceae) 'Ganja' or 'Charas' or 'Bhang'.

Leaves and seeds are crushed and mixed with sugar, are taken in stomach trouble and indigestion. The dried leaves and flowers are given in dyspepsia, gonorrhoea and also in a nervine stimulant.

Ganja, charas and bhang are obtained from different parts of plants. The oil of the seeds is used in the manufacture of paints, vanishes and soap. The fibre of the plant is used for making ropes, cables, nets, carpets and as a pecking material.

Cassia absus Linn. (Caesalpiaceae)

Parts of the stem are woven and tied around the opposite ear to remove migraine.

Cassia occidentalis Linn (Caesalpiaceae)

Leaves are externally used in case of various cutaneous diseases especially ring worms.

Roasted seeds are sometimes used in place of coffee.

Cassia tora Linn. (Caesalpiaceae) 'Pwar' or 'Chakora'

A paste of the root made with lime juice is used for extracting ring worms. Root is also used in snake bite. The leaves are used during intestinal disorders amongst children. Seeds are externally used in various skin diseases.

The leaves are cooked and eaten in times of scarcity by poor people.

Celosia argentea Linn. (Amaranthaceae)

Leaves are crushed and the paste is applied on scorpion sting.

Cleome gynandra Linn (Capparaceae)

Leaves paste is used in rheumatism headache and stiff neck. It's warm juice is popular remedy for ear diseases.

Centella asiatica Linn (Apiaceae)

Leaves are taken to improve memory and as a nerve tonic. Extract of plant is taken in fever.

Convolvulus microphyllus Sieb. Ex. Spreng (Convolvulaceae).

Leaves are used as a cooling agent during summer. Extract of whole plant taken with sugar in diarrhoea and dysentery.

Cryptolepis buchnanii Roem & Schult. (Asclepiadaceae) 'Dudhia'.

Powdered roots given to expecting mothers for promoting lactation. Leaf juice is put

into nose drop by drop to cure intermittent fever.

Cyperus rotundus Linn. (Cyperaceae).

Rhizome is taken in dysentery and stomach disorder. The Rhizome yields an essential oil which is used in perfumery and in manufacture of soap and agarbatties. It is also used as an insect repellent. Leaves are used as fodder for cattle.

Cythocline purpurea (Don.) Kuntze (Asteraceae).

Roots are given in stomach pain.

Dentrophthoe falcate (Linn. f.) Etting (Loranthaceae).

The powder of the stem is applied in wounds. It is believed to be useful as brain tonic or in impotency when growing on *Calotropis* and *Tamarindus* respectively.

Echinops echinatus Roxb. (Asteraceae).

Decoction of whole plant is used during malarial fever.

Eclipta prostrate (Linn.) Linn. (Asteraceae) 'Bhingraj'.

A paste mixed with sesame oil is used in elephantiasis and skin diseases. It is also used in headache and toothache. The juice from the fresh leaves when mixed with 'Nim Oil' is applied to promote the growth of hairs. The extract of whole plant is taken for chronic fever.

Elephantopus scaber Linn. (Asteraceae)

The decoction of roots along with the roots of *Hemidesmus indicus* and *Piper nigrum* is given in gonorrhoea. The plant paste with

Arthyrium filix – femina and mixed with sugar is prescribed twice daily to the patients suffering from tetanus, without sugar is applied externally in rheumatism. Root powder mixed with boiling water is given internally to cure colic pain and burning sensation.

Erigeron Canadensis Linn. (Asteraceae).

Extract of plant is taken in diarrhoea and dysentery.

Eupatorium odoratum Linn. (Asteraceae)

Juice of the green leaves is applied in fresh cuts.

Euphorbia hirta Linn. (Euphorbiaceae)
'Dudhi'

The latex is applied to eyes in children when they turn reddish. Extract of plant used in bowel complaints and cough. It is also given in dysentery. The crushed plant is fried and applied to cuts.

Euphorbia thymifolia (Euphorbiaceae)
'Chhoti Dudhi'

Dried leaves and seeds are given to children in bowel complaints.

Evolvulus alsinoides Linn. (Convolvulaceae)
'Shankpushpi'

Extract of plant with sugar is given in diarrhoea and dysentery.

Glinus lotodites Linn (Molluginaceae).

Dried plants used in diarrhoea and abdominal disorders.

Graphalium luteo – album Linn. (Asteraceae)

The paste, of the whole plant is applied on the breast for lactation.

Hyptis suaveolens (L.) Pot. (Lamiaceae).

Leaves and flowers are crushed and applied on forehead to relieve headache.

Ipomea carnea Jacq. (Convolvulaceae)

Leaves coated with sarson oil is externally used on swelling testicles.

Jatropha curcas Linn. (Euphorbiaceae)

Young branches warmed in fire act as a foment in pain of joints.

Lantana camara Linn. (Verbenaceae)

The crushed leaves are applied to wounds.

Launaea nudicaulis Hook.f. (Asteraceae).

Crushed leaves are applied on forehead during headache.

Leonotes nepetaefolia R. Br. (Lamiaceae).

Smoke for calyx given in stomach pain. Seeds diuretic also given to cattle in dropsy.

Leucas cephalotes Spreng (Lamiaceae).

Juice of the plant is externally used in scabies. Leaves are taken as blood purifier. Flowers are taken for cough and cold.

Ocimum americanum Linn. (Lamiaceae)

Crushed leaves applied on forehead during headaches. They are also used for wounds in animals.

Oxalis corniculata Linn. (Oxaladaceae)
'Khattibutti'

The leaves are used for removing warts, corns, and other excrescences on the skin and opacity of the cornea.

Phyllanthus fraternus Webster
(Euphorbiaceae)

The fresh roots are given in jaundice. The plant juice is given in genitor – urinary diseases.

Sida cordifolia Linn. (Malvaceae) ‘Mamas’.

Leaves are externally used to healing sores.

Sida rhombifolia Linn (Malvaceae).

Leaves are used for healing sores. The whole plant is aphrodisiac.

Solanum nigrum Linn. (Solanaceae)

The leaf juice is given in inflammation of the kidney and bladder. Hot leaves are applied over the swollen and painful scrotum and testicles. The berries are given in fever, diarrhoea, and heart diseases. Plant juice is taken in enlargement of liver.

Sphaeranthus indicus Linn. (Asteraceae) ‘Mundi’

Decoction of the plant is diuretic and used in urethral discharges. Flowers are taken in summer as a tonic and cooling agent. Fruits are said to be digestive.

Spilanthus acmella (Linn). Murr.
(Asteraceae).

Leaves and flowers are taken in summer as a tonic and blood purifier. The flowers are applied on teeth during toothache.

Tephrosia purpurea (Linn.) Pers.
(Caesalpinaceae).

Root is taken in diarrhoea. The leaves are useful in jaundice. A decoction of the dried plant is given in diseases of liver, spleen, breast bronchitis, gonorrhoea, asthma, tumours, ulcers and piles. It is also taken as a blood purifier. Seed is used in abortion and flavouring milk.

Tribulus terrestris Linn. (Zygophyllaceae) ‘Gokhru’

Fruits are taken in various types of urinary diseases. Infusion of fruit is also given in kidney diseases.

Trichodesma indica R. Br. (Boraginaceae).

Root is taken in stomach disorders.

Vetiveria zizanioides (Linn.) Nash. (Poaceae)

Anthelmintic for children.

Vitex negundo Linn. (Verbenaceae)

Roots are used as expectorant and tonic. Leaves are smoked in headache. Decoction of them is used in rheumatism.

Xanthium sarumarium Linn. (Asteraceae)

Roots are taken as a good tonic. Leaves are given in scrofula and herpes. The plant decoction is given in long standing malarial fever and diseases of urinary systems.