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“Seethamudi”– An Unexplored herb

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Abstract

The unconventional usage of plants in olden days leads to the loss of many plants with different medicinal properties which leads to the non-availability and also the lack of sharing of information on medicinal and treatment methods to new generations. The lack of attention given to the explanations of medicinal plants is also a major reason for the scarcity of several high value medicinal plants, Seethamudi is one of the best examples for this. Since the new generation didn't know about the medicinal properties of Seethamudi, presently the plants are growing as an ornamental plant in many nurseries because of external beauty. The present review will help the researchers to get information about one of the unexplored medicinal plants.

Keywords: Seethamudi, *Phyllodium longipes*.

Introduction

The use of plants as a source of medicine has been well documented in indigenous traditional knowledge systems across the world. Medicinal plants are a major source of chemical constituents which plays an important role in health care system both for humans and animals not only in the diseased condition but also for maintaining health. In the world, both developed and undeveloped countries are still using plants as a source of drug for maintaining the well-being of humans.

Seethamudi in malayalam language is the name of plant identified with *Phyllodium longipes* (Craib) Schindl from fabaceae family. The plant has synonyms like; *Desmodium longipes*, and *Desmodium tonkinense*. In siddha Vaidya this plant is mentioned as a Balajadamani. The plant is sun loving and can tolerates shade. *Phyllodium longipes* is also called as Arbhudhanasi, Seethamudi and Balajadamani It was used commonly for the treatment of piles and fistula in the early days. Presently the plant has primary position for the treatment of cancer hence it is now called as Arbhuthanasini. Consumption of Arbhuthanasini in powder form for the cancer treatment has great result and can be used against 50 types cancer.

Seethamudi has a great role in the treatment of pancreatic cancer. The plant can also increase the production of beta cells and which in turn can control the diabetes. The plant has matured and tender leaves and both the leaves have similar medicinal properties, in addition paste form of the matured leaves are also used for the external application.



Seethamudi plant showing flowers

In south India, the plant species is commonly called as fish scale and dragon's tongue. The plant is commonly distributed throughout tropical Asia, Southern China, Cambodia, Myanmar, Vietnam and Thailand. Genus "*Phyllodium*" describes a flattened leaf like stem, a reference to the leaf like bracts enclosing the plant's flower. Species "*longipes*" means long stalked. Alluding to the trailing inflorescence shoot. The plant is having ornamental value too.

The species is a woody leguminous shrub with 2-4 m in height with densely covered leaves possessing shiny brown hairs,

Terminal leaves are lanceolate to oblong with 14-20 cm length and these terminal leaves are usually longer than lateral leaves. The leaves are simple, alternate with pinnate venation. Margins are entire. Stems are woody and not having branches but are brown in colored and pubescent.

Flowers of the plant are very small and yellowish white in colour and inconspicuous, subtended by a pair of green leaf like bracts arranged along pendulous flowering shoot. Flowering season of the plant is from August to September. Flowers are bisexual.

Fruits are very small and jointed down on the both sides with small elliptical seeds. Fruits are produced in the plant from October to November. Fruits are simple, dehiscent dry fruits and are of capsule type. The plant is having underground root system with taproot and fibrous root.

Taxonomical Characters

Kingdom-Plantae

Sub kingdom-Viridiplantae

Infra kingdom- Streptophyta

Division-Tracheophyta

Sub division-Spermatophytina

Super division -Embryophyta

Order- Fabales

Family- Fabaceae

Sub family- Faboideae

Genus -Phyllodium

Species-longipes

Part Used: whole plant

Traditional Use

- Combination of seethamudi along with wild yam is used in the treatment of piles.
- Seethamudi along with vaj is commonly used for throat cancer.
- Consumption of leaf decoction of seethamudi and banana blossom can reduce diabetes.
- 10ml of leaf extract of kudangal, balikaruka, elamulachi, perikilam blossom and 30ml fresh cow milk are mixed with paste of leaf bracts of seethamudi used twice a day this is followed 90 days along with uncooked vegetarian food, may help to prevent cancer in the early stages.
- 5g of purified churna of koduvelikizhagu and 30ml fresh cow milk with paste of leaf bracts of seethamudi take early morning for 30days help to prevent cysts in stomach, fibroids etc.
- Root decoction of the plant is used to treat kidney stone, bodily discomfort and cancer, pile, fistula.

Conflict of interest: Nil

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*The information furnished in this review article were collected from the traditional physicians and tribals of various districts of Kerala by conducting interviews, discussions etc. and also from different internet sources like Kerala plants.in