

Ghritakumari (Aloe vera)

Botanical Name

Aloe barbadensis Mill.

Family - Liliaceae

Rasa Panchaka-

Rasa - Tikta, Madhura

Guna - Guru, Snigdha, Pichchila

Virya - Sheeta

Vipaka – Katu

Useful part-Patra (Leaves)

Karma (Action)



Bhedana, Rasayana, Netrya, Brahmana, Balya, Vrashya, Vishahara, Jwarahara, Kushthaghna, Krimighna.

Pharmacological Actions

Anti-inflammatory, Coolant, Laxative, Diuretic & Aphrodisiac.



Doshakarma (Action on Dosha)-

Tridosha Shamaka, Vata Shamaka due to Snigdha guna, Pitta Shamaka because of Shita virya and Tikta Madhura rasa and Kapha Shamaka because of Katu vipaka and Tikta rasa.

Pharmacological actions –

Vata-kaphahara, Bhedini, Netraja, Rasayana, Balya, Vrishya, Brimhana.

Indications- Gulma, Plechavriddhi, Yakrid-vriddhi, Granthi, Agnidagdha, Vrana, Vis-phota, Twagroga.

Amayika Prayoga(Therapeutic uses)-

1. Plechavriddhi (Splenomegaly) - Kumari swarasa with Haridra churna orally is useful. (Sarangadhara)
2. Stanaroga (Breast disorders) Root of Ku-mari and Haridra kalka are applied external-ly. (Gadanigraha)
3. Daha (Burns) - Kumari swarasa and Jeeraka are made into paste and applied externally. (Rasaratnasamuchchaya)
4. Kamala (Jaundice) - The nasal administra-tion of juice relieves Kamala. (Bhavaprakasha)

Chemical constituents -

Aloe-Emodin, aloctin A (glycoprotein), aloe-nin (bitter glucoside), barbaloin, chrysophanol glycoside; galactose, mannose; aldopen-tose, aloesin, aloesone, b -sitosterol, aloctin A & B etc.

Specific formulations- Kumaryasava, Ku-marika vati, Rajahpravartini vati, Kumari paka.

Synonyms

1. Sthuldala
2. Ghritkumari
3. Vipulsrava
4. Kanya
5. Grihakanya

The plant has got very good medicinal properties and useful in disorders of teen, so liked by all the people.

Vernacular Names-

Sanskrit- Kumari, Ghritakumari

Hindi- Ghikunvar

Distribution- Aloe barbadensis is found running wild or under cultivation in arid and semi arid situations and other less rain fall zones of India including Guntur, Cuddapah and Anantapur of Andhra Pradesh. The plant is supposed to be the native of Maditerranean region, now naturalized in other Asian Coun-tries, West Indies, Central America etc.

Note The drug 'Aloes' (Local name Musambram) is extracted from various species of the genus Aloe including Aloe barbadensis.

External Morphology-

Perennial, succulent herb, stemless and branchless. Leaves radical, arranged in a ro-sette, ensiform, 30-50 cm long, 5-10 cm broad at base, fleshy and 1-3 cm thick with prickly margins and pale green skin, often with white patches; sap yellowish and bitter to taste. Inflorescence of 1-3 axillary racemose scapes, each upto 1.25 m long; flowers bisexu-al, arranged in the upper 1/3-1/2 portion, or-ange red in colour, cylindric, about 2.5 cm long', 6 lobed; stamens 3 + 3. Fruit of an ellipsoid- oblong capsule about 1.5 cm long and 1 cm broad; seeds numerous.

Flowering - September-December.

Fruiting - December-February.

Varieties

Commercially there are four varieties.

1. Curacao aloes
2. Cape aloes
3. Socotrina aloes
4. Zanzibar aloes

Chemical tests

Freshly prepared bromine solution is added to a small quantity of the filtrate prepared by 1 g of aloe powder boiled with 10 ml water and filtered with help of Kieselguhr. The test gives a pale yellow precipitate of tetrabromalin.

Adulterants

Black catechu, Pieces of iron and stones.

Grahya Laxana (Genuine features)-

Juice obtained from pulp of leaves when dried becomes solid mass of irregular shape and different sizes, dark chocolate to black in colour surface is hard, opaque with slightly vitreous appearance. On breaking become pieces exposing a glossy somewhat sticky surface. Thin pieces are translucent and brownish in colour. It has got nauseating odour and bitter taste.

The fresh juice which is obtained by crushing the white pulp of green succulent leaves. It is a sticky liquid of golden yellow colour having nauseating odour and metallic taste.

Note- The drug 'Aloes' (Local name Musambram) is extracted from various species of the genus Aloe including Aloe barbadensis.