

**Sarpagandha (*Rauwolfia serpentina*)**

**Family-**Apocynaceae

**Synonyms**

1. Gandhnakuli
2. Chandramaar
3. Vishmardani

**Vernacular Names**

English -Serpentine  
Hindi -Chota chand



**Habitat & Distribution**

Sarpagandha grows all over India, especially in Bihar, West Bengal, Deccan states and Uttar Pradesh.

*Rauwolfia serpentina* is a member of forest undergrowth found along the sub Himalayan tract and other parts of the country, in deciduous and moist deciduous forests, including those of Eastern and Western ghats. The species is distributed in Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Java, Myanmar and other tropical countries.

**Botanical Description**

**Morphology**

Habitat-Small erect shrub grows upto 90 cm high.

Bark-Pale

Leaves-3 Leaves in one whorl, 7.5 to 18 cm long, 2.5 to 6 cm wide, lanceolate, acute or acuminate, glabrous bright green above, pale beneath, base is tapering, main nerves are 8 to 10 pairs, and petiole is 8 mm long.

Inflorescence-Many flowered, irregular corymbose cyme.

Flower - White, 3 to 6 mm long, bright red, bracts beneath the pedicels triangular, acute, Calyx is glabrous, bright red, Corolla 1 to 15 cm long, tube is slender.

Fruit-Drupes, Single, 6 mm in diameter, becomes purplish black when ripe.

**Flowering & Fruiting** - Throughout the year.

**Phytoconstituents** - About 30 indole alkaloids have been reported in drug and total alkaloidal content of rauwolfia roots ranges from 0.7 to 3% depending upon the source. The important alkaloid is reserpine. Apart from the alkaloids it also contains oleo-resin, phytosterol, fatty acids, alcohol and sugars. The other alkaloids present in the drug are ajmaline, Ajmalicine, Rauwolfinine, Reserpine, Yohimbine, Serpentine and serpentine.

**Matra (Dosage)**

Churna (Powder) - 125 mg to 1 g

**Rasadi pancaka**

- Rasa -Tikta
- Guna -Ruksha
- Vipaka - katu
- Virya- Ushna

**Useful part-**Mula (Root)

**Karma (Actions)**

Nidrakara, Vedanasthapana, Vishaghna, Jwaraghna, Krimighna, Vranahara, Unmadahara. Gandhanakuli (Sarpakshi)

Krimighna, Vishaghna and Vrana ropaka.

**Dosha Karma (Action on Dosha)**

Vata kapha Shamaka, Vatahara due to Ushna virya. Kapha Shamaka because of Ushna virya, Katu vipaka and Tikta rasa.

**Rogagnata (Therapeutic indications)**

- Raktabharadhikya, Nidranasha, Vedanayukta vikara, Visha vikara, Jwara, Krimi.
- Vrana and Unmada.
- Gandha Nakuli
- Krimi, Vishavikara and Vrana

**Amayika prayoga(Therapeutic uses)**

- Unmada (Mental disorders) - Sarpagandha is included in Aparajita gana which is indicated in mental disorders. (Sushruta)
- Visha roga (Poisoning) - Sarpagandha is particularly efficacious in rat poisoning. (Sushruta)
- Vishuchika (Cholera) - Sarpagandha should be taken with warm water. (Vaidyamanorama)

**Specific Formulation-** Ekasara yoga,lashunadi varga siddha Ghrata

## **Varieties**

### **Dh. Ni-2 Types**

1. Nakuli - *Raulwolfia serpentina* Benthex Kurz.
2. Gandhanakuli - *Ophiorhiza mungos* Linn.

### **Ra. Ni - 2 types**

1. Nakuli
2. Mahasugandha

### **Grahya Laxana (Genuine Characteristics):**

Root is stout, cylindrical, somewhat crooked, up to 20 cm long and 1.8 cm in diam. The external surface is rough, longitudinally fissured and yellowish brown in colour. It bears occasional root scars. In older roots the bark becomes thick, corky and friable and constitutes a substantial part of the root. Transversely cut surface shows a thick bark enclosing a brownish tissue having prominent growth rings and medullary rays. On breaking root becomes short pieces and taste very bitter.