



International Journal of Homoeopathic Sciences

E-ISSN: 2616-4493
P-ISSN: 2616-4485
www.homoeopathicjournal.com
IJHS 2020; 4(4): 17-18
Received: 11-08-2020
Accepted: 16-09-2020

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***Boerhavia diffusa*: A traditional herb in homoeopathy**

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Abstract

Boerhaavia diffusa, a perennial creeping weed found in tropics and sub-tropics. The whole plant and its different parts (leaves, roots and stems) and plant extracts have been widely used in various traditional and folklore systems of medicine for treatment of various ailments. It is known as Punarnava in Ayurveda and is a main ingredient in many formulations of Ayurveda. The whole plant contains numerous bioactive compounds which are responsible for its pharmacological activities. The first prover is S.C. Ghosh.

Keywords: *Boerhavia diffusa*, punarnava, alkaloid, diuretics, mother tincture, homoeopathy

Introduction

The medicinal value of this plant in the treatment of a large number of human ailments is mentioned in Ayurveda, Charaka Samhita, and Sushrita Samhita [10]. The plant was named in honour of Hermann Boerhaave, a famous Dutch physician of the 18th century [1]. Has marked diuretic properties. Dropsy associated with healthy kidneys and early liver and peritonal conditions [9].

Synonym [4-6]

Tamil	Mukaratte-Kirai
English	Spreading Hogweed, Red Hogweed, Pigweed, Horse Purslane, Red Spiderling, Tarvine

Scientific Classification [7]

Kingdom	Plantae
Order	Caryophyllales
Family	Nyctaginaceae
Genus	<i>Boerhavia</i>
Species	<i>B.diffusa</i>

Boerhavia diffusa



Distribution [1]

The plants grow vigorously as weeds in tropical and subtropical regions such as India, Brazil, Africa, Australia, China, Egypt, Pakistan, Sudan, Sri Lanka, USA, Iran and in several countries of the Middle East. Out of these, six species of Boerhaavia are reported to occur in India – *B. diffusa*, *B. chinensis*, *B. erecta*, *B. repens*, *B. rependa*, and *B. rubicunda*.

Botanical Description

Boerhavia is a large genus of widely distributed pubescent or glandular tropical herbs of the four -o'clock family ^[4]. Flowers: small apetalous flowers ^[4]. Fruits: club shaped ribbed fruit ^[4]. Root: The root is stout, fusiform, rootstock woody ^[5]. Stem: Stem upto 1 m long, slender, prostrate or ascending ^[5]. Leaves: Leaves are thick arranged in unequal pairs at each nodes, 1-4 cm long ^[5].

Chemical Constituents ^[1]

Important chemical constituents are punarnavine, punarnavoside, boerhavin and boerhavic acid.

Pharmacological Activities ^[10]

The pharmacological activities of *Boerhavia diffusa* includes hepatoprotective activity, diuretic and nephroprotective activity, anti-proliferative and anti-estrogenic activity, anti-inflammatory activity, anti-convulsive activity, anti-stress/adaptogenic/immunomodulatory activity, anti-bacterial activity.

Boerhavia diffusa In Homoeopathy Parts Used For Preparation: Whole Plant ^[5]. Therapeutical Action ^[4] This drug expels the accumulated water of dropsy. Refreshes the kidneys and heart. Can be used safely when R.B.C of blood reduces. Soup of leaves can fed to dropsical patients. Removes the mitral and tricuspid disorders of heart.

Clinical ^[3, 8, 9]

Asthma, Beriberi, High Blood Pressure, Dropsy, Jaundice, Gonorrhoea, Heart troubles, insomnia, nephritis, bites of venomous animal, ascites, cirrhosis; etc.

Symptoms**Mind**

Embarrassed; weak and gloomy ^[4].

Head ^[3]

Terrible; bursting; Right sided headache better by cold application; giddiness.

Face

Pale, swollen and anaemic ^[4].

Mouth

Dry and pale tongue; sticky saliva, tastelessness, white coated tongue ^[4].

Cough ^[3]

Coryza with dry cough and thick white expectoration.

Heart

Frequent palpitation and intermittent throbbing pain in cardiac region ^[3]. Sensation as if the breath would stop immediately ^[4]. Difficult breath; weakness and dyspnea marked by dropsy ^[4]. Irregular pulse; hypertrophy of heart ^[4].

Liver

Slight pain in hepatic region was felt on touch or pressure and better by hard pressure. Cirrhosis of liver ³. Drowsiness with nausea and excessive vomiting. vomit of biles; enlargement of liver ⁴.

Swelling

Swelling of eyelids; hands; abdomen; legs and feet ^[3]. The drug gives wonderful result in anaemia and pernicious anaemia ^[4].

Urinary Organs

Scanty and high coloured urine ^[3]. Difficulty in passing urine; nephritis ^[4]. The bladder become swollen; loss of activation of kidney; dropsy of bladder ^[4].

Pain

Rheumatic pain all over the body ^[3].

Sleep

Restlessness and little sleep; irritation of whole body ^[4].

Conclusion

The multiple benefits of *Boerhavia diffusa* made it a true miracle of nature ^[10]. Its active principle is diuretic chiefly acting in kidney and also strengthen the heart and regulate blood pressure ^[4]. In homoeopathy, it is prescribed in the form of mother tincture ^[5].

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