**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 peritontial conditions [9].

**Synonym** [4-6]

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<th>Tamil</th>
<th>Mukaratte-Kirai</th>
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<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>Spreading Hogweed, Red Hogweed, Pigweed, Horse Purslane, Red Spiderling, Tarvine</td>
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**Scientific Classification** [7]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kingdom</th>
<th>Plantae</th>
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<tr>
<td>Order</td>
<td>Caryophyllales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Nyctaginaceae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genus</td>
<td>Boerhavia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Species</td>
<td>B.diffusa</td>
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**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]

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, Gonorrhea, 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 bile; 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].

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

Conclusion
The multiple benefits of Boerhaavia 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).

Reference
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