

NEWSLETTER

Knowledge of herbs – *Bergenia Ciliata*

Bergenia Ciliata also known as the ‘Winter begonia’. This species of *Bergenia* is very unique and much sought after by collectors. The rhizome is a well known Indian drug, mentioned by the name PASANADHEDA or stonebreaker. It was believed to break the rock in which it lived it was used to dissolve gravel or stone in the bladder and act as a diuretic. It grows in the temperate Himalayas between altitudes of 900 and 3,000 m.

Taxonomy Hierarchy

Kingdom Plantae

Order saxifragales

Family saxifragaceae

Genus *Bergenia*

Species *B.ciliata*



Other common names

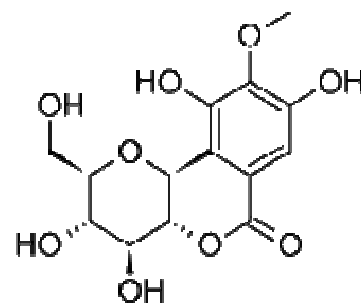
Eng. velvet leaf, guj. - Pakhanabheda, hind: - Pakhanabheda, punj: - Kachalu

Description

They are clump-forming, rhizomatous, evergreen perennials with a spirally arranged rosette of leaves 6–35 cm long and 4–15 cm broad, and pink flowers produced in a cyme the leaves are large, leathery, ovate or cordate and often have wavy or saw-toothed edges. For most of the year, the leaves have a glossy green colour, but in cooler climates, they turn red or bronze in the fall. The flowers grow on a stem similar in colour to a rhubarb stalk and most varieties have cone-shaped flowers in varying shades of pink. These can range from almost white to ruby red and purple.

Biologically active constituents

The root contains 14 - 16% tannin. A good ground cover plant, forming a slowly spreading clump. The rhizome contains an active principle, berginin (0.6%). Berginin and its glycosides along with β -sitosterol, gallic acid, catechin-3-gallate and afzelechin is the major constituent reported from the rhizome.



Berginin

Medicinal uses.

A juice or powder of the whole plant is used to treat urinary troubles in Nepal the juice of the leaves is used as a tonic in the fevers, diarrhea and pulmonary affections. The root juice is used to treat coughs and colds asthma and urinary problems externally the root is bruised and applied as a poultice to boils.

Pharmacological activities

Bergenia ligulata showed antilithiatic properties other pharmacological actions reported are antiinflammatory and antibacterial. It is also reported in dissolving kidney stones. In lower doses, the extract is mildly diuretic. In higher doses, it shows anti- diuretic action and cardio toxic. It has depressant action on the central nervous system.

Adulterants/substitutes

Bergenia stracheyi which is morphologically distinct in having the root stock covered with brown leaf scars and *Arva lanata* juss. Ex schult are substitute for pashanbhed.

Safety aspects

The drug is traditionally considered to be safe in small dosages mentioned

References

1. *Manandhar. N. P. Plants and People of Nepal Timber Press. Oregon.*
2. *Brickell. C. The RHS Gardener's Encyclopedia of Plants and Flowers Dorling Kindersley Publishers Ltd.*
3. *Thomas. G. S. Plants for Ground Cover J. M. Dent & Sons*
4. *Thomas. G. S. Perennial Garden Plants J. M. Dent & Sons, London.*
5. *Duke. J. A. and Ayensu. E. S. Medicinal Plants of China Reference Publications.*
6. <http://www.perennials.com>

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