



Herbal Garden (Muligai Vanam)

Indian Copperleaf (Kuppaimeni)



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Botanical Name:	<i>Acalypha indica</i> L.
Tamil Name:	Kuppaimeni
Sanskrit Name:	Harita manjari
English Name:	Indian Acalypha/Indian Copperleaf

Distribution and Habitat:

Acalypha indica is an annual weed. It belongs to the family Euphorbiaceae. It is a common weed found in many parts of Asia. It grows in the common farmlands, gardens, roadside waste lands (Syed et al. 2014). Apart from India, this plant is also found extensively in many other countries like Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Yemen, South Africa and also the tropical regions of Africa. *Acalypha indica* is a small annual erect herb that grows up to 0.6 m and is capable of reaching heights of 1.5 m to 2.5 m. It is a taproot type plant and its leaves are 2.5 - 7.7 cm long with 2.0 - 4.5 cm broad either ovulate or rhombic ovulate shape. Leaves are simple and arranged spirally, 0.02 - 12.00 cm petiole long; blade broadly ovate to ovate-lanceolate. The flowers are arranged in numerous lax, erect, elongated, auxiliary spikes and cluster near the summit of the spikes. The fruits are small and hairy. The seeds are minute, ovoid in shape and pale brown in colour. The capsules are small, hispid and quite concealed by the bract (<https://indiabiodiversity.org>).



Parts Used:

Whole plant

Edible Uses:

In India and Indonesia the plant is cultivated for its edible shoots and leaves, which are cooked as a vegetable (Schmelzer, 2007).

Medicinal Uses:

In many areas in wet, temperate, tropical and climate regions, this plant is considered as a weed. Apart from that, many people from different countries take advantage of this plant and consume it for its many therapeutic purposes. Plants are emetic expectorant, laxative and diuretic, useful in bronchitis, pneumonia, asthma and pulmonary tuberculosis. Leaves are laxative and anti-parasiticide, ground with common salt or quicklime or lime juice externally in scabies (Rang et al. 2009). Leaf paste prepared with lime juice is used for ringworm and the paste is used as emetic for children. A decoction of the leaves is given in earache. Powder of the dry leaves is given to children to expel worms; also given in the form of decoction with little garlic. The leaves also contain good anti-bacterial activity, anti-fungal activity and anti-oxidant phytochemicals which are useful in protecting the skin from external hazards. The leaf powder sometimes mixed with salt is applied externally to maggot-infested wounds, skin parasites and other skin problems. A leaf decoction is used as a massage cream to treat pain of the joints (Evans 2002).

Conclusion:

Acalypha indica (Euphorbiaceae) is an herb distributed throughout India and other tropical regions of the world. The various parts of the plant are widely used in a variety of ailments in traditional system of medicine such as Ayurveda and Siddha. Documenting ethno-medicinal herb is extremely important as it gives very useful information on growers' preferences and uses, traditional ecological knowledge and on role of growers in conservation and use, which could be effectively used in developing appropriate research and development programmes on *Acalypha* plant species.

