



Herbal Garden (Muligai Vanam)



Peppermint

Dr. A. Abirami

Programme Officer

C.P.R. Environmental Education Centre
Chennai

Botanical Name	:	<i>Mentha x piperita</i> L.
Sanskrit Name	:	Paparaminta
English Name	:	Peppermint

Distribution and Habitat

Mentha x piperita L. a medicinally important plant belongs to the family Lamiaceae. It is widely grown in temperate areas of the world particularly in Asia, Europe, North America and Africa but nowadays cultivated throughout the world. The plant is strongly scented, rhizomatous perennial herb, about 30 to 90 cm in height; stem square erect, branched, upper portion quadrangular; rhizomes wide-spreading, fleshy with fibrous roots; leaves 4 to 9 cm long and 1.5 to 4 cm broad, opposite, petiolate, ovate-oblong to oblong-lanceolate, dark green on the upper surface; flowers 6 to 8 mm long, purplish, fruit consists of 4 ellipsoidal nutlets. The plant can spread quickly through underground stem.



Parts used: Whole plant

Phyto-chemical constituents

Volatile oil such as menthol, menthyl acetate, menthone, pulegone, menthofuran, limonene, carvone, linalool, linalyl acetate and piperitenone oxide, flavonoid glucosides, monoterpenes, poly-phenolics, triterpenes.

Uses

The plant has rich menthol content, and is often used as flavouring in tea, ice cream, confectionery, chewing gum, and toothpaste. Peppermint can also be found in some shampoos and soaps, which give the hair a minty scent and produce a cooling sensation on the skin. Mint oil tends to utilize it as environmentally friendly insecticides and pesticides for its capability to destroy various pests like wasps, hornets, ants, and cockroaches.

Medicinal uses

Ancient records describe various medicinal properties of peppermint as a popular source to cure different disease conditions in China, India, and Egypt. The plant is used directly as an herb or as a main component for production of a number of medicines and food supplements such as physical rejuvenation, therapy for the conditions affecting liver, kidney, cardiovascular system and immune systems. The plant is mostly used in personal hygiene products,



pharmaceutical products, cosmetics due to its fragrance and flavouring properties. Fresh leaves have been utilized for chewing. It is also used as a mouthwash to treat bleeding gums. Crushed leaves were utilized for the brightness of teeth during ancient times. Leaf is used as a remedy for common cold, inflammation of the mouth, pharynx, liver, as well as disorders in the gastrointestinal tract such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, cramps, flatulence and dyspepsia (Sun et al. 2014). It is also used as antioxidant, antimicrobial, antiviral, anti-inflammatory, and anti-carcinogenic agent. In Eastern and Western traditional medicine peppermint and its oil have been used as an antispasmodic, aromatic, antiseptic and also in the treatment of cancers, colds, cramps, indigestion, nausea, sore throat and toothaches (Singh et al. 2015). The mint oil also improves urine and serum biochemistry, making it a safer and more cost-effective option for kidney stone prevention and treatment. It possesses antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties which are used to prevent diabetes, respiratory disorders, inflammation process and chronic degenerative disease.

Conclusion

Mentha x piperita has been and remains one of the most widely used herbs for medicinal purposes since its discovery. It is used in cosmetics, personal care products, food and pharmaceutical products because of its taste and aromatic properties. The plant is known to have many health benefits, including digestion, alleviating headaches, reducing stress and improving respiratory issues.

