

BOERHAAVIA DIFFUSA

(Punarnava)

Common Name	:	Punarnava
Sanskrit	:	Sothaghni, Rakta Punarnava
Hindi	:	Sant
English	:	Spreading Hogweed
Family	:	Nyctaginaceae

Introduction:

Boerhaavia diffusa, an indigenous plant, commonly known as *Punarnava*; in **Hindi Sant** and *Punarnava* in **Bengali**. It was frequently used by ancient Indian physicians for its efficacy in oedema, anaemia, disease of the heart, cough and intestinal colic. CCRH conducted its proving in Ghaziabad and Calcutta in 1983-84. The provings and clinical confirmation of many of the symptoms elicited during the provings confirm its sphere of action not only on head and heart but also on other parts of the body especially respiratory/ chest, generalities.

Description:

The plant dries up, but again in the rainy season fresh branches grow from the root and plant is generally renovated from its old and almost dead structure. On account of this curious phenomenon, the plant is called *Punarnava*.

This plant is found to grow all over India. The roots of the plant are stout and fusiform and have a bitter and nauseous taste. From the root numerous stems, 2 to 3 feet long, slender and covered with minute hairs, are given off. The stem is generally viscid and glabrous. The leaves are thick, unequally arranged, green and glabrous above and generally white underneath. The base of the leaf is rounded and subcordate, and the petioles are as long as the leaves. It contains flowers which are small and sessile 4 to 10 together. The fruit is oblong dull green or brownish about the size of a caraway bean.

The *Ayurvedic Physician* recognize two varieties of the plant, the one with white flowers called *Shweta Punarnava*, and the other containing red flowers called *Rakta Punarnava*. The *Tibbi authorities* recognize a third variety with *blue flowers*. Punarnava is with white flower variety. In Homoeopathy white flowered variety is mainly used. Our experience is with white flower variety.

Herbaceous, diffuse; root large, fusiform, stems prostrate or ascending, reaching 0.6-0.9m long divaricately branched, slender, cylindrical, thickened at the nodes, minutely pubescent or nearly glabrous, often purplish. Leave at each node in unequal pairs, the larger 2.5-3.8cm., the smaller 1.3-2cm. long, both nearly as broad as long broadly ovate or sub orbicular, rounded at the apex, green and glabrous above usually white with minute scales beneath, the margins entire. Flowers very small, shortly stalked or nearly sessile, 4-10 together, in small umbels arranged in slender long stalked corymbose, axillary and terminal panicles. Fruit 3mm. long, clavate, rounded broadly and bluntly 6 ribbed very glandular.

DISTRIBUTION

Throughout India, Baluchistan, Ceylone, Asia, Africa and America.

Part Used:

Entire fresh herb with flowers or dried powder of the whole plant with flowers.

Clinically Verified Symptoms

Name of Drug : Boerhaavia Diffusa

Potency : Q, 6, 30

Location	Symptom	Source	No. of patients prescribed	No. of patients relieved
Head	Headache - frontal pain	9	91	66
	(<due to heat of sun)	-	16	16
	>pressure	8	66	50 ✓
	>cold application	4	56	40
	Headache bursting (at vertex) > cold application	4,8	228	156
	>pressure	8	94	62
	<pressure	8	12	8
	Headache	9	32	16
	Migraine right side, (tearing) pain (<cold)	7	14	14
	Vertigo	Vertigo <morning	7	91
(with heaviness of head)		-	16	16
Vertigo with hypertension		8	30	18
Nose	Coryza	4,7,8	128	84
	With thin, watery discharge	8	125	81
	With thick nasal discharge	9	35	18
Abdomen	Pain in right hypochondrium <touch, pressure	7	9	9
	Jaundice	4,7	9	9
Urinary	Urine - scanty & burning during urination.	7	15	11
	Dark yellowish urine	7	10	8
	(Frequent urination)	-	4	4
Male genitalia	Nocturnal emission, with increased desire <morning	8	1	1
	(leucorrhoeal discharge with itching in Vagina & vulvae)	-	2	2
Female genitalia	Menses irregular, very small quantity Painful for 4-5 days with pain in legs <by movement, with profuse urination	8	6	5
Respiratory	Cough with white scanty expectoration <night	8	136	83
	- thick white	7	80	50
	Dry cough <night	8	53	51 ✓
	Dyspnoea (Asthmatic)	7	6	2
	Palpitation of with dyspnoea	4,7	322	198
Chest	Pain in chest-cardiac region	4	10	10
	Hypertension	7	213	115

Location	Symptom	Source	No. of patients prescribed	No. of patients relieved
Back	Backache- lumbo sacral region	4	6	5
Sleep	Sleeplessness	9	4	3
Fever	Fever with chill < night	8	92	54
Extremities	Dropsical swelling -legs & feet	4,7	63	44
General	Dropsical swelling all over body	4,7,10	323	198
	Hypertension with puffiness of face with palpitation & anxiety	4,7	41	31 ✓
	Body ache	7	50	50 ✓

Note:- Additional symptoms (which are not present in literature) are in brackets & bold.

Additional Symptoms:	No. of Patients Relieved
Headache < due to heat of sun	16
Vertigo with heaviness of head	16
Frequent urination	4
leucorrhoeal discharge with itching in Vagina & vulvae	2

Discussion

The pathogenesis obtained during the course of proving and subsequently clinical verification comprehensively suggests that Boerhaavia diffusa has a special affinity for the heart (hypertension), and dropsical swelling all over body. This is exhibited by the symptoms produced and verified in the head, vertigo, coryza, liver pain, jaundice, cough, palpitation with dyspnoea, pain in cardiac region, hypertension with puffiness of face, dropsical swelling all over the body and body ache. The symptoms simulate that of Digitalis. The clinically verified symptoms of Headache, vertigo, Pain in liver region, jaundice, scant urine, nocturnal emission, cough, palpitation with dyspnoea, pain in cardiac region, jaundice with heart disease, swelling of the feet, dropsical swelling are the similar symptoms with Digitalis. Hypertension with puffiness of face is the key note symptoms of this drug which has been repeatedly verified.