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Cover story

Kampillaka

Mallotus philippinensis (Lam.) Muell. Arg.

Family: Euphorbiaceae

Vernacular names: Sinhala: *Hamparila*; English: *Kamala*

Tamil: *Kapila*; Sanskrit: *Kampilya*, *Kampillaka*, *Raktaphala*, *Recana*¹.

Mallotus philippinensis is a very common perennial shrub, one of the medicinally important plant used in indigenous system. *M. philippinensis* has a widespread natural distribution, from the western Himalayas, through India, Sri Lanka, to southern China, and throughout Malesia to Australia. Trees are small to medium-sized monoecious in nature, up to 25 m tall and with a bole up to 50cm in diameter, but usually much less in number. Slash turning deep red. Branchlets are reddish- brown glandular. Leaves are alternate and simple, more or less leathery, ovate to lanceolate, cuneate to rounded with two glands at base. Leaves are mostly acute or acuminate at apex, conspicuously 3-nerved, hairy and reddish glandular beneath, petiole size 1–4cm long, puberulous and reddish-brown in color.

Male flowers in terminal and axillary position, 2–10cm long, solitary or fascicled paniculates spikes, each flower are with numerous stamens, small; female flowers have spikes or slender racemes, each flower with a stellate hairy, 3 celled ovary with 3 papillose stigmas. Fruit is a depressed-globose; 3-lobed capsule; 5, 7 mm, and 10 mm; stellate; puberulous; with abundant orange or reddish glandular granules; 3-seeded. Seeds are subglobose and black in color and 4 mm across². Major phytochemicals present in this genus contain different natural compounds, mainly phenols, diterpenoids, steroids, flavonoids, cardenolides, triterpenoids, coumarin, isocoumarins, and many more.

Specially roots, fruits and fruit powder (glands/hairs of the fruit) and the leaves are used for medicinal purposes. Leaves are bitter, cooling and appetizer. The glands/hairs of the fruit and the leaves³ are recommended for dermal problems. Many scientific investigations have been carried out to validate and investigate the pharmacological activities of *M. philippinensis*.

The review paper of *Mallotus philippinensis* (Lam.) Muell. Arg. on page 364.

References

1. Anonymous, 1979, Ayurveda Pharmacopea, Vol 1, Part 2, Department of Ayurveda, Sri Lanka. 47.
2. Gangwar M., Goel R. K., Nath G., 2014, *Mallotus philippinensis* Muell. Arg (Euphorbiaceae): Ethnopharmacology and Phytochemistry Review, BioMed Research International, Special issue, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1155/2014/213973>
3. Kirtikar K R., Basu B D., 1996, Indian Medicinal Plants Vol 3, Valley offset printers and Publishers, Dehradun, India. 2267 -2268.

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