



Kalmegh: Truly a Panacea

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Botanical name - *Andrographis paniculata*

Family – **Acanthaceae**

Kalmegh is a very important medicinal crop. Since the dawn of time, kalmegh has been used as medicine since it is a resilient plant. In the West Indies, this plant is also known as "Rice bitter," whereas in England, it is called "King of bitters" or "Chiretta." In India, medications are made from the dried and fresh leaves and tender shoots of Kalmegh. The apical part of the branches is surrounded by four quadrangular wings. The height of its plant ranges from more than 50 cm to 1 meter. It is an annual plant which is grown in most parts of India but still it is cultivated in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Assam.

It is grown in different types of soil but prefers sandy loam to heavy loam soil. The soil which has high amount of humus and drainage facility is available, is considered suitable for its cultivation. It is additionally capable of being grown on shaded wastelands. The plant requires a hot, humid climate with lots of sunshine. With the arrival of monsoon, plant grows luxuriantly and begins to flower in September as the temperature moderates.

Medicinal properties: You will definitely say that Kalmegh is truly a panacea after knowing all of its benefits hidden behind it, because in this modern era of advanced medical sciences, few people are aware of its qualities and some have forgotten. Let me remind you all through this article.

- The plant as a whole, including the root, is used as a remedy for a variety of ailments, with the leaf serving as the principal curative component. Many chronic and infectious conditions, including sore throats, fever, herpes, upper respiratory and gastrointestinal infections, are treated with this herb.
- Use the *Andrographis paniculata* leaves and roots to cure a range of ailments, including diarrhea, fevers, and getting rid of intestinal worms.
- The herb is used as a blood purifier, antidote for snake, scorpion, and centipede stings, a liver tonic.
- Furthermore, it helps against wounds, dermatitis, leprosy, and inflammation. Itching can be relieved using plant powder.
- Anti-acne: Prevent blisters on the skin.
- As a home therapy of children's bloating and bowel movements, the juice and soaked leaves are also utilized.
- For newborns with colic and other digestive disorders, they are formulated into pills and prescribed.
- The plant was utilized by the indigenous people as an astringent, anodyne, tonic, and alexipharmic substance.

- The leaves have been used in decoction or infusion with positive outcomes for scabies, fever, anemia, and a sluggish liver.
- The root's tincture is employed as a tonic, stimulant, and aperients.
- Various plant parts, either by themselves or in combination with other Indian plants, are used in many Indian and other Asian communities for neuralgia, fever recovery, and liver torpidity.
- The herb serves as the major constituent of a traditional home treatment that is employed as a febrifuge and bitter tonic.

Harvesting: After 90–100 days, when leaves begin to shed, the maximum herb biomass can be achieved. The crop should be collected by the end of September when flowering begins if it is grown as an annual crop and sown in the months of May and June. Active principle andrographolide is abundant in leaves during the beginning of flowering. The entire gathered material is dried in the shade and ground into powder because the entire plant contains active ingredients.

Marketing : The overwhelming demand for Kalmegh across the globe makes cultivation necessary. Kalmegh is an incredible medicinal herb with rising demand on the domestic and foreign markets. There was just one source, but it is quickly running out due to overuse. So its cultivation is necessary.

