



Periwinkle- A Meditational Plants

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Periwinkle is scientifically known as *Catharanthus roseus* belongs to Apocynaceae family. *Catharanthus roseus* is an ornamental and important medicinal plant which is using in traditional medicine for a long time. Commonly it is called as cape periwinkle, Madagascar periwinkle, old maid, graveyard plant, rose periwinkle, pink periwinkle. It is native to Southern Asia and Madagascar.

- ❖ *Catharanthus roseus* is also found in India and grows in Southern and Northern hills of India. Locally it is known as Kemuunting China in Malaysia.
- ❖ It is used by National Cancer Council of Malaysia for the cancer patients. Every part of this plant is very useful.
- ❖ The flowers are very colorful and useful of this plant. The leaf juice of *Catharanthus roseus* reduced the level of blood glucose which is positive point for diabetic treatment.
- ❖ It is also known as “Sadabahar” and “Nayantara”. There are many pharmacological activities such as ant diabetic, antibacterial, anticancer, antioxidant etc. are reported.
- ❖ *Catharanthus roseus* Linn is the best herbal medicinal plant which highly contains various important phytochemicals substances like flavonoids, steroids, tannins, phenolic compounds, alkaloids, carbohydrates, quinines, terpenoids, saponins and etc.
- ❖ This plant mostly found in tropical and sub-tropical southern Asian countries and spread over the hills, plains and mountains of northern and southern India.

The phytochemicals of *Catharanthus roseus* are classified into two groups which are primary metabolites & secondary metabolites. The primary metabolites are obtained during growth phase and secondary metabolites are obtained from primary metabolites but they not directly involved in the life process of plant. Primary metabolites present in *Catharanthus roseus* are purines, pyrimidines, amino acids and carbohydrates. Secondary metabolites are alkaloids, flavonoids, saponins, steroids, phenols, glycosides and etc. In the clinical trials and experimental animals *Catharanthus roseus* has various potential pharmacological uses in modern medicines for anticancer, ant diabetic, antimicrobial, antioxidant, anti-diarrheal, antihelmenthic, hypertensive, wound healing, hypolipidemic, Alzheimer disease, ant allergic and cardio protective effects.

Botanical description

Catharanthus roseus is an ornamental and evergreen plant. It is 1 meter or 39-inch-tall, 3.5 in width, hairless, pale midrib and glossy green. It has a short petiole 1.2-1.8 cm tall and arranged in opposite pairs. The colours of flowers are white to dark pink and it has a darker red centre. Fruits are pairs of follicles which are 2-4 cm tall and 0.3 cm in width.

Flowers: It is an elegant, pink or white, centre of this flower may be red,



pale yellow, white or purple colour. Follicle is 1.2-3.8 x 0.2-0.3 cm which is wide open on the axial side.

Seeds: 0.1-0.2 cm are grooved and numerous on one side.

Leaves: Leaves are oval and it is 1-2-inch-long, petiole, decussate; elliptic, lamina variable, narrowly obovate; apex mucronate.



Light: Bright colour, it included 3 or 4 hrs of direct sunlight daily which is very significant for better flowering.

Temperature: Normal room temperature is suitable at all times. Temperature is below 100C.

Feeding: As the beginning of flowers and apply standard liquid fertilizer each two weeks.

Traditional Uses

- ❖ In various different countries *Catharanthus roseus* has been used as traditional medicine.
- ❖ The homed remedy of dried leaf of plant boiled with water then that extract administered orally to treat the diabetes in northern India.
- ❖ This plant also been used in many therapies for cancer treatment patients in Kenya.
- ❖ Ppeople of Kancheepuram in Tamil Nadu India, prepare powder of whole plant and combined with cow's milk and administered orally to cure diabetes.
- ❖ The dried root of *Catharanthus roseus* helps to prevent urogenital infections in Venda region of southern Africa.
- ❖ In some region of Africa roots of this plant used for treatment of gonorrhoea. People of Zimbabwe used *Catharanthus roseus* for stomach ache infection.

Health Benefits of Periwinkle

- ❖ Periwinkle has been known to possess analgesic, antibiotic, antibacterial, laxative and hypertensive properties.
- ❖ The periwinkle poultice is used to prepare a bandage for stopping bleeding in wounds.
- ❖ The plant is being used to treat infections and serves as a protection against voodoo magic.
- ❖ It is an astringent herb which is used as a mouth rinse to soothe the pain for canker sores.
- ❖ Periwinkle contains tannins that bind up fluids and relieves inflammation.
- ❖ It produces an alkaloid called vincamine that helps in promoting the aerobic glycolysis, essential to cerebral health.
- ❖ Periwinkle is recommended by many herbalists to women for excessive bleeding during menstruation.
- ❖ While the lesser periwinkle helps improving blood circulation especially in the brain, the greater periwinkle is used for treating anxiety or nervousness and reducing blood pressure.
- ❖ Periwinkle is a useful treatment for colitis, diabetes, diarrhea, bleeding gums, nosebleeds, sore throats and mouth ulcers.
- ❖ Periwinkle leaves are bruised and applied directly to the affected areas to treat wasp stings, relieve eye inflammation and stop bleeding.
- ❖ Periwinkle tea has anti-cancer and blood sugar lowering properties.
- ❖ The tea helps treating memory loss problems and improves blood circulation.
- ❖ It aids in the treatment of mouth sores, headaches and diarrhea.

Caution

- ❖ Periwinkle is not recommended for people suffering from low blood pressure and constipation.
- ❖ Also people who have kidney/liver/ lung disease should not try periwinkle herb.
- ❖ Care should be taken while giving periwinkle to children or pregnant women.
- ❖ Regular consumption of periwinkle can result in flushing and gastrointestinal problems.
- ❖ It is advisable to consult a herbalist or a doctor before consuming periwinkle.