

JYOTISMATI (CELASTRUS PANICULATUS WILLD.) AN IMPORTANT MEDICINAL PLANT OF AYURVEDA

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ABSTRACT

Jyotiṣmatī is an important medicinal plant which belongs to Celastraceae family generally known as *Mālakāṅganī* or black oil plant and has been in use from ages. Botanically it is known as *Celastrus paniculatus* Willd. It is climbing in nature with long slender like branches which are brown in colour. Plant of *Jyotiṣmatī* is broadly used in Ayurvedic system of medicine to cure many diseases and symptoms such as arthritis, asthma, antipyretic, amenorrhea, anti-paralysis, thermogenic, intellect-promoting, leprosy, leucoderma, nephropathy, abdominal disorders, sores and treatment of snake bite. This plant is naturally used in the treatment of vaginal discharge, burning sensation, blood purification, asthma, paralysis, abdominal disorders etc. The seeds of *Celastrus paniculatus* have very hot potency, which means seed powder produces heat in the body and gives feeling of warmth after its consumption. This effect generally appears with larger dosage of *Mālakāṅganī*. However, smaller dosage may also increase heat in the body, but upto tolerable level. Therefore, its higher doses are chosen to be used in winter season and lower dosage for hot season. Its lower dosage is effective in management of several diseases. Celastrene and paniculatine are the two alkaloids present in the seeds.

Keywords: *Celastrus paniculatus*, *Jyotiṣmatī*, *Medhya*, Anti-depressant, *Śirovirecana*.

INTRODUCTION

Jyotiṣmatī is an important and ancient Ayurvedic herb. It is used for its immense health benefits. It has been mentioned in Ayurvedic classics which are considered as *Mālakāṅganī*. The botanical source of this herb is *Celastrus paniculatus* Wild. It belongs to Celastraceae family. In *Āyurveda* it is mentioned as “Tree of Life”. The oil extracted from *Jyotiṣmatī* seeds is known to have effect on Central Nervous System. It is mentioned under “*Śirovirecanopaga*

mahākaṣāya”¹ by *Caraka* and considered to be an effective *Śirovirecana* drug. *Ācārya Śūsruta* has mentioned *Jyotiṣmatī* under “*Arkādigaṇa*” and considered to be an effective for *kṛmi* and *kuṣṭha*. Among the *Adhobhāgahara dravyas* the latex of *Jyotiṣmatī* is used as a purgative agent. *Vāgbhṭa* emphasized the use of *Jyotiṣmatī* in *kuṣṭha* (skin disease) and *bhagandara* (fistula-in-ano). *Dalhaṇa* considered *Jyotiṣmatī* as *Kākamardinikā* which possess round

and red seeds yielding yellow oil. It is a large woody liana commonly known as black oil plant, climbing staff tree and intellect tree. It is a large woody climbing shrub with a yellowish bark which is referred to as *Jyotiṣmatī* in *Āyurveda*, and the dark brown oil extracted from the seeds called as *Jyotiṣmatī* oil², *Celastrus* oil³. The climbing shrub grows throughout India at an elevation upto 1800m. *Celastrus paniculatus* is a deciduous vine with stems upto 10cm in diameter and 6m long with rough, pale brown exfoliating bark covered densely with small, elongated lenticles. The leaves are simple, broad, and oval in shape with toothed margins.⁴

Vernacular names

Botanical name: *Celastrus paniculatus* Willd.; **English name:** Black oil plant, climbing staff tree; **Hindi name:** Malkangini; **Sanskrit name:** Jyotiṣmatī, jyotishka, katabhi, kanguni; **Malyalam:** Cherrupunnari, puluruvam; **Kannada:**

Taxonomical classification⁵

Kingdom- Plantae; **Sub-kingdom-** Tracheobionta; **Superdivision-** Spermatophyta; **Division-** Magnoliophyta; **Class-** Magnoliopsida; **Subclass-** Rosidae; **Order -** Celastrales; **Family-** Celastraceae; **Genus-** *Celastrus*; **Species-** *paniculatus*

Morphological description⁶

Large deciduous twining shrubs, stem up to 23 cm in diam.; bark pale brown, rough and cracked, exfoliating in small scales; branchlets pubescent or glabrous, with prominent elliptic lenticles; axillary buds small, 1-2 mm, triangular. Petiole 6-16 mm; leaf blade elliptic, oblong, rectangular, ovate, or obovate to suborbicular, 5-10 × 2.5-5 cm, glabrous, base cuneate, margin serrate, apex mucronate to acuminate; secondary veins 5-7 pairs, rarely abaxially pubescent at axil of veins. Thyrses terminal, 5-10 cm, 1- or 2-ramous; rachis and pedicels occasionally with short tomentum; pedicels 3-6 mm. Flowers greenish, 5-merous, dioecious, 2-3 × 1.2-1.8 mm; sepals free, imbricate, semiorbicular, ciliate; petals oblong to obovate-rectangular. Disk membranous, cupulate, slightly 5-lobed. Stamens ca. 3 mm, inserted on margin of disk. Ovary globose. Capsule 1-1.3 cm in

diam., depressed, globose, 3-valved, bright yellow, 3-6-seeded. Seeds elliptic, 3.5-5.5 × 2-5 mm; aril orange-red. Flowering occurs from April-June.

Phytochemistry⁷

Celapagin, Celapanigin, Celapanin, Celastrine and Paniculatine are main phytochemicals.

Global distribution⁸

Guangdong, Guangxi, Guizhou, Hainan, Taiwan, Yunnan [Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam; Australia, Pacific islands (New Caledonia)].

Botanical Synonyms⁹

Celastrus metzianus Turcz.; *Celastrus nutans* Roxb.; *Celastrus pubescens* Wall.; *Celastrus rothianus* Schult.; *Diosma serrata* Blanco; *Euonymus euphlebiophyllus* Hayata; *Scutia paniculata* G.Don

Sanskrit synonyms mentioned in different

nighantu¹⁰⁻¹⁶
Karriganē; **Tamil:** Valuluvai; **Telugu:** Malkangini, peddamaveru
Agnibhā, Agnibhāṣā, Alavaṇā, Bahnirūcī, Durmadā,

Jyotiṣkā, Jyotiṣmatī, Jyotiṣyā, Kākādanī, Kālā, Kaṅgunī, Kaṅgunīkā, Kaṭabhī, Kaṭvikā, Kinśukā, Kuṭṭanī, Latā, Latafutaṭakī, Latikā, Lavaṇā, Lavaṇī, Lavṇoktā, Mālakāṅganī, Paṇyalatā, Parāvatapadī, Piṅgavī, Piṅyāka, Pītatailā, Salavaṇā, Sphuṭatwacā, Sūkṣamaphalā, Suvarṇā, Suvarṇalatikā, Tripaṇṇī, Vegā, Vṛṣā (Table 1).

Properties & therapeutic uses

Rasa (Taste)- Kaṣāya, Tikta, Kaṭu; **Guṇa (attribute)-** Tikṣṇa, snigdha, sara; **Vīrya (Potency)-** Ūṣṇa; **Vipāka (Post digestive effect)-** Kaṭu; **Doṣakarma-** Vāta-kaphahara; **Karma-** Virecanīya, vāmaka, dīpana, medhya, kaṇḍughana, vrṇāśodhana; pāṇḍu and visarpa nāśaka. (Table 2)

Classical uses

According to Caraka saṁhitā¹⁷

- Śirovirecana- *Jyotiṣmatī* is used for Śirovirecana¹⁸.
- It is used to treat Śirosūla (headache), pīnasa roga (sinusitis), ardhāvabhedaka (hemicrania), Kṛmija śiroroga, apasamāra (epilepsy), gandhgyāna-nāśa (anosmia) and mūrchā¹⁹.

- **Śirovirecana Mahākaṣāya**- It is one of the drug mentioned in *Śirovirecanopaga mahākaṣāya*. So it is used for *Śirovirecana karma* also²⁰.
- **Dāhjawara (fever)** - It is one of the contents mentioned in *Candanādya taila*. This *taila* is used for *abhyanga* in case of *dāhjawara*²¹.
- **Apasmāra (epilepsy)** - It is used as a *nasya* in *apasmāra cikitsā*²².
- **Viṣa cikitsā (Treatment of poison)** - It is used as a *nasya* in *Viṣa cikitsā*²³.
- **Dant cikitsā (Dental treatment)** - It is among one of the contents mentioned in *Tejohvādi cūrṇa*. It is used as a tooth paste in the diseases related to teeth and gums, like bleeding gums, pain and itching²⁴.

According to Śūśruta saṁhitā^{25,26}

- **Udara rog cikitsā**- *Jyotiṣmatī taila* with *swarjikā kṣāra*, *hiṅgu* and *kṣhīra* is given internally in *udara rog cikitsā*.
- **Vraṇa śodhana cikitsā (Treatment of wound)**- *Jyotiṣmatī taila* is used in *Vraṇa śodhana cikitsā*.
- **Bhagandara (Fistula-in-ano)**- *Jyotiṣmatī taila* is used in *bhagandara śodhana cikitsā*.
- **Unmāda**- *Jyotiṣmatī* is one of the ingredient mentioned in *brahmyādi varṭī* and is used as *nasya*, *añjana*, *dhūmrāpāna* etc.

According to Aṣṭāṅga hṛdaya²⁷

- **Kuṣṭha cikitsā (Treatment of skin diseases)**- *Jyotiṣmatī taila* is used in the treatment of *sidhma kuṣṭha*
- **Unmāda cikitsā**- *Jyotiṣmatī* is one of the constituent of *unmādsūdanī varṭī* which is used as *nasya*, *añjana*, *lepa* or *dhūpa* in *unmāda roga*²⁸.
- **Vraṇa (Treatment of wound)**- It is among one of the contents mentioned in *vraṇa-ropaṇa taila*. It is used for *vraṇa ropāṇa*²⁹.
- **Bhagandara**- *Jyotiṣmatī taila* is used in the treatment of *bhagandara*³⁰.

According to Kaiyyadeva Nighaṇṭu³¹

- **Medhya (Brain tonic)**- It is used as a brain tonic.
- **Cakṣuṣya** - It is highly beneficial for eyes.
- It acts as *varṇya*, *vraṇya* and used to treat *visarpa* and *pāṇḍu*.

According to Rāja-Nighaṇṭu³²

- **Vāta rog cikitsā**- *Jyotiṣmatī taila* is used to treat *vāta* associated disorders.
- It is used as a brain tonic

According to Cakradutta³³

- **Yonivyāpada cikitsā**- It is used in *yonivyāpada cikitsā*.

According to Vaṅgasena³⁴

Udara roga cikitsā- *Jyotiṣmatī taila* mixed with milk is used to treat *sannipāta udara roga*.

Some other medicinal uses

External use:

- Oil is used externally.
- Oil massage is *Vātanāsaka* and *vednāsāmaka*, so it is used in paralysis, backache, arthritis and sciatica.

Internal uses:

Nāḍī-sansthāna:

- *Ūṣṇa* property enhances grasping power. Cow's ghee and *Jyotiṣmatī* oil mixture is used as a *medhya* (memory enhancer).
- Improves memory by *medhya guṇa*.
- Morphine addiction can be counteracted by daily consumption of 60 ml. of leaf juice of *Jyotiṣmatī*.

Raktavaha-sansthāna:

- *Ūṣṇa* property stimulates heart. Hence, improves cardiac output.
- It is used in *hridayamandā* (bradycardia).
- Black oil of *Jyotiṣmatī* is used in beriberi.

Pācana-sansthāna:

- Due to its *Kaṭu*, *Tikta* and *Ūṣṇa guṇa*, it is used in *agnimāndya* (loss of appetite).
- *Snigdha* and *Ūṣṇa guṇa* improve peristalsis and are therefore useful in overcoming *vibandha* (constipation) and *gulma*.

Śwasanan-sansthāna:

- Due to its *Kaṭu rasa*, *Ūṣṇa guṇa*, *kaphaghna* and *śirovirecaka* action, it is used for *nasya* and is useful in *kāsa-śwāsa*.

Mūtrawaha-sansthāna:

- Due to its *Ūṣṇa guṇa*, it increases the renal circulation and hence acts as diuretic. Therefore, it is

used in *mūtrakṛccha* (dysuria) due to excessive cold.

Prajanana-sansthāna:

- It is used in *klaibaya roga* (infertility).
- Black oil with milk is given for internal use.
- Leaves fried in ghee are used as vegetable in *kaṣṭārtava* (dysmenorrhea).

Twaka-sansthāna:

- Cures skin disorders.

Taapkaram: By *Kaṭu* and *Tikta* property, it is used as antipyretic. Within 2-3 hours, it reduces fever by promoting sweating

Chemical composition

Celastrus paniculatus shows that all the four extracts i.e. aqueous, petroleum ether, chloroform and ethanolic extracts showed the presence of alkaloids, tannins and fixed oils. Carbohydrates, Phenolic compounds, flavanoids and saponins are present in only aqueous extract while sterols and triterpenoids are present in aqueous, ethanolic extracts.

Part used: Leaves, seeds, Oil, Bark

Safety profile: Generally, low dosage (500 mg) of *Celastrus paniculatus* seeds is well tolerated and likely safe in all kinds of patients. According to *Āyurveda*, it has very hot potency and acrid in nature which is likely to increase *pitta* in the body. Therefore, it is recommended in patients with *vāta* and *kapha* body type or having *vāta* and *kapha* dominant symptoms.

Side effects: Restlessness, Giddiness, Heat sensation, Burning sensation and Excessive sweating

Research Work Done

1. Antidepressant-Like Activity of *Celastrus Paniculatus* Seed Oil- *Celastrus paniculatus* seed oil administered for 14 successive days to mice produced significant antidepressant-like effect in mice behavioral models like TST and FST probably by interaction with dopamine-D₂ receptors etc³⁵.
2. Behavioural and pharmacological studies of a tranquilising fraction from the oil of *Celastrus paniculatus* (malkanguni oil)³⁶.
3. Anti-inflammatory activity of *Celastrus paniculatus* seeds- This study was performed to

evaluate scientifically the anti-inflammatory activity on the albino rats and it shows significant anti-inflammatory activity³⁷.

4. Role of “*Jyotiṣmatī*” in the treatment of CNS disorders- By studying the various uses and benefits of *Jyotiṣmatī*, it is clear that it has significant effect on various disorders and in treating various illness not only nerve disorders but also problems related to skin, fever and cardiac disorders etc³⁸.
5. Neuroprotective effect of *Celastrus paniculatus* on chronic stress-induced cognitive impairment- *Celastrus paniculatus* oil treatment for 14 days showed beneficial effect on chronic restraint stress-induced cognitive deficits. It restored spatial learning and memory, showed anti-anxiety activity in stressed condition. This work provides a novel perspective on beneficial effect of herbal therapy on stress-induced cognitive dysfunctions. However, further studies are necessitated to identify cellular and molecular mechanisms of this herb on cognitive-enhancing activity in stress and stress-associated disorders³⁹.
6. Antispermatic action of *Celastrus paniculatus* seed extract- The present results indicate that *Celastrus paniculatus* oil may have useful antifertility effects and that the degenerative changes seen in the liver are reversible with time⁴⁰.
7. Determination of phytochemical, antioxidant, antimicrobial, and protein binding qualities of hydroethanolic extract of *Celastrus paniculatus*- In the current study, hydroalcoholic extract of this plant exhibited better antioxidant and protein binding activities. A significant relationship between the phenolic/flavonoid compounds and antioxidant capacities indicated that these are the major contributors of antioxidant capacities of these plants⁴¹.
8. Phytopharmacology of *Celastrus paniculatus*- *Celastrus paniculatus*, a traditional ayurvedic medicinal plant used for centuries as a memory enhancing, anti-inflammatory, analgesic, sedative and antiepileptic agent. The seed extract has been

extensively investigated in several laboratories for their neuropharmacological effects and a number of reports are available confirming their nootropic action. In addition, researchers have evaluated the anti-inflammatory, anticonvulsant and other pharmacological effects of CP preparations/extracts⁴².

9. Effect of *Jyotiṣmatī* (*Celastrus paniculatus*) seeds in animal models of pain and inflammation- The plant has shown significant pharmacological activities like anti-arthritic, wound healing, hypolipidemic and antioxidant⁴³.
10. Nootropic activity of *Celastrus paniculatus* seed- The effect of *Celastrus paniculatus* Willd. seed aqueous extract on learning and memory was studied using elevated plus maze and passive avoidance test (sodium nitrite induced amnesia rodent model⁴⁴.

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Table 1: Sanskrit synonyms of mentioned in different nighantu

Nighantu/ Synonyms	Bhāvaprakāśa Nighantu	Dhanwantari Nighantu	Kaiyadeva Nighantu	Śoḍhala Nighantu	Madampāla Nighantu	Nighantu Ādarsa	Śankara Nighantu	Hṛdyadīpaka Nighantu
Kākadanī	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
Jyotiṣmatī	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	-
Kaṭabhī	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	-
Jyotiṣkā	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kangunī	+	-	-	-	+	+	-	-
Parāvātpadī	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Paṇyālatā	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

<i>Suvarnā</i>		+	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Latikā</i>	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Lavaṇā</i>	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Agñibhāṣā</i>	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	-
<i>Sūkṣamaphalā</i>	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Vegā</i>	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-
<i>Latā</i>	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Kaṭvikā</i>	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Kuṭṭanī</i>	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Vṛṣā</i>	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Pītatailā</i>	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	+
<i>Salavaṇā</i>	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Pinyāka</i>	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Sphuṭatwacā</i>	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Kaṅgunikā</i>	-	-	+	-	-	--	-	-
<i>Suvarṇalatikā</i>	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	-
<i>Jyotiṣyā</i>	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
<i>Agñibhā</i>	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
<i>Lavṇoktā</i>	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
<i>Durmadā</i>	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
<i>Lavaṇī</i>	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
<i>Kinśukā</i>	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
<i>Tripaṇī</i>	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
<i>Bahniruci</i>	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-
<i>Alavaṇā</i>	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-
<i>Mālakāṅganī</i>	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+
<i>Latafuṭakī</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-
<i>Piṅgavī</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-
<i>Kālā</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-

Table 2: Properties & therapeutic uses

<i>Nighaṅṭu</i>	<i>Madanpāla Nighaṅṭu</i>	<i>Bhāvaprakāśa Nighaṅṭu</i>	<i>Nighaṅṭu Ādarśa</i>	<i>Dhanwantari Nighaṅṭu</i>	<i>Śankara Nighaṅṭu</i>	<i>Kaiyyadeva Nighaṅṭu</i>
<i>Rasa</i>	<i>Kaṭu, Tikta</i>	<i>Kaṭu, Tikta</i>	<i>Kaṭu, Tikta</i>	<i>Tikta</i>	<i>Tikta, Kaṣāya</i>	<i>Kaṣāya, Tikta, Kaṭu</i>
<i>Guṇa</i>	<i>Tikṣṇa, Snigdha, Sara</i>	<i>Tikṣṇa</i>	<i>Tikṣṇa</i>	<i>Tikṣṇa</i>	<i>Tikṣṇa</i>	<i>Snigdha, Tikṣṇa</i>
<i>Vīrya</i>	<i>Ūṣṇa</i>	<i>Kaṭu, Tikta</i>	<i>Ūṣṇa</i>	<i>Ūṣṇa</i>		<i>Ūṣṇa</i>
<i>Vipāka</i>	<i>Kaṭu</i>	<i>Kaṭu</i>	<i>Kaṭu</i>		<i>Kaṭu</i>	<i>Kaṭu</i>
<i>Doṣakarma</i>			<i>Vāta-kaphahara</i>	<i>Kaphahara</i>		<i>Kapha-vaatahara</i>
<i>Prāyogika karma</i>	<i>Medhya, virechanīya, kandughana, vraṇaśodhana</i>	<i>Virechanīya, vāmaka, dīpana</i>	<i>Medhya, dīpana</i>	<i>Medhya, vṛṇya, virechaka</i>	<i>Dīpana, vāmaka,</i>	<i>Pāṇḍu, visarpa, vṛṇya</i>

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