

Adhatoda vasica Nees

Family: Acanthaceae

Vernacular names: Sanskrit - Vasa; Hindi - Arusha - Adulasa; English - Malabar nut; Unani - Arusa; Tamil - Adathodai; Bengali - Bakash

Part Used: leaves, root, flowers, stem bark

Ayurvedic Energetics: Rasa: bitter, astringent Veerya: cooling Vipaka: pungent Gunas: light, drying

Doshas: KP- ; V+

Pharmacological Action: expectorant, antispasmodic, bronchodilatation, diuretic

Clinical Research: The leaves of the plant contain the alkaloid vasicine (C₁₁H₁₂N₂O), which is responsible for the small but persistent bronchodilatation, and an essential oil which is chiefly responsible for the expectorant action. The leaves and roots contain other alkaloids, vasicinone, vasicinolone and vasicol, which may contribute to the bronchodilatory effect through anticholinergic action on the vagal innervation of the bronchii. The bronchodilation effect is considerably increased after atropine administration. Studies have also shown vasa to be effective in the treatment of amlapitta (dyspepsia) and pyorrhea . The in vitro growth of several strains of *Mycoplasma tuberculosis* was inhibited by the essential oil at concentrations in the range of 2-20 ug/ml. . There has also been a report of thrombopoietic (platelet-increasing) activity with vasicine.

Traditional Uses: The juice expressed from the leaves and the decoction of the leaves and roots are useful in asthma, bronchitis, and other chronic coughs. Dried leaves are used in dhoomapana (smoking) in the treatment of bronchial asthma. The leaf decoction is an excellent expectorant when decocted with punarnava (*Boerhaavia diffusa*) and then combined with ginger juice and black pepper. Another effective preparation for the treatment of asthma is the decoction of vasa, guduci (*Tinospora cordifolia*), and kantakari (*Solanum surratense*) mixed with honey. Vasa has also been used to treat skin conditons by combining it with triphala and using the decoction both internally and externally. Vasa was also indicated in the treatment of internal hemmorrhage; for this indication it was ususally decocted with haritaki, made into a ghrita, or taken alone as the leaf juice. A famous passage from the Harita Samhita states: "In the presence of Vasa why should those suffering from intrinsic hemmorrhage, wasting, and cough be doubtful that there is hope for survival?".

Indications: asthma, brochitits, cough, local bleeding, thrombocytopenia, pyorrhea