

***Phrynium capitatum* Willd. (Koupat)**



National Mission on Himalayan Studies



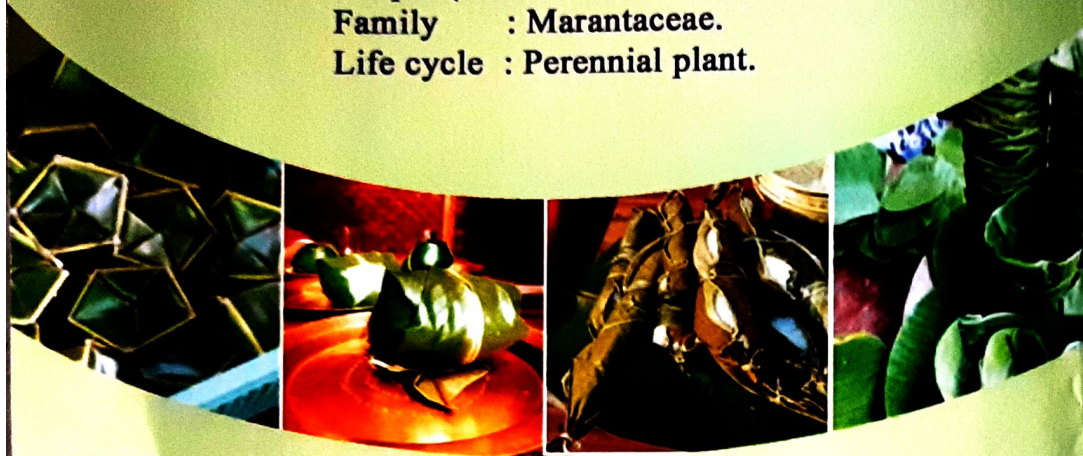
Rain Forest Research Institute
(Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education)
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
Government of India

Phrynium capitatum Willd.

Local name: Koupat (Assamese), Tongching (Khampti)

Family : Marantaceae.

Life cycle : Perennial plant.



INTRODUCTION

This perennial plant is having broad shiny leaves bearing white flower. It attains a height up to 2m. It is found in Eastern Himalayas, Malay Peninsula, Malabar and Sri Lanka. The leaves are used in weddings and various religious ceremonies by the local people.

CULTIVATION

In agroforestry system of the cultivation, the plant is semi-domesticated and its growth is promoted by pruning of leaves/lateral tillers for enhancing light conditions and weeding of the forest floor. The plant grows naturally through seeds in the natural forests as well as in agroforestry.

HARVESTING

Phrynium leaves can be harvested both from natural forest as well as from agro-forests. A mature plant generally consists of 6-7 leaves. Entire older leaves are cut from the base of the plant excluding at least 2 younger leaves. This helps the plant for further regeneration. The harvesting can be done three times in a year.

UTILISATION

The leaves are preferred as packing and wrapping material by local people over polythene because of its capacity in retaining moisture and keeping the packed edibles fresh and lasting longer. Fifteen to eighteen leaves are vertically placed and tied together to form a roll and these rolls are sold in bundles in local market. The Tagin tribe of Arunachal Pradesh reported to utilize leaves of *P. capitatum* as antidiabetic, analgesic, anti-hyperglycemic traditional medicine (Jaiswal, 2019)



Bundles of *Phrynium* leaves.

AGROFORESTRY

Phrynium capitatum can be cultivated with other crops such as *Piper betel* (Pan), *Thysanolaena latifolia* (Broom grass), *Areca catechu* (Tamul) and other vegetables and seasonal crops (Tynsong, et al. 2011).

VALUE ADDITION AND USES

The leaves of the *Phrynium* are traditionally used as plates and dish by the tribal communities and same also introduced presently in hotels. Leaves are used to fashion small plates for use in homes. Also used to wrap, fruits and vegetables. traditionally people use to wrap fish fillets for baking in hot ashes in remote village homes or while out fishing in the hill streams. It also adds flavours and colour to the wrapped food items .

When sold in local market, a farmer can sale one bundle @ Rs. 25. Every bundle consists of 100 leaves. Wholesale rate of 5 bundles of leaves are sold for Rs.100. Value addition can be done by making two dishes or 4 bowls from one *Phrynium* leaf, and these dishes or bowls can be sold at Rs. 1.00 respectively. By value addition the farmer can makes 4 times profit.

MARKET POTENTIAL

The *Phrynium* leaf has got a very good market in the state of Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh. There is very small inter-state marketing with Assam and a small quantity is traded to Bangladesh via Dawki market. The growers bring the product to the local market where they sell it to the traders, who in turn directly sell it to the consumer at different local and regional markets.

ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE

Leaves of *Phrynium* are the most common wrapping and packaging material used by the people of Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh. It is also used in different religious ceremonies by tribal people. It has high demand and market potential.



Various uses of *Phrynium* leaves.



Various uses of *Phrynium* leaves.

FOR FURTHER READING

Tynsong, H., and Tiwari, B.K. (2011) Contribution of *Phrynium capitatum* Willd. leaf a non-timber forest product to the livelihoods of rural poor of South Meghalaya, North-East India. Indian Journal of Natural Products and Resources, 2(2) :229-235

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