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*Aristolochia indica*

**INDIAN BIRTHWORT** is a deciduous twining shrub. Native to the East Indies (the islands of the Malay archipelago) and India it has inconspicuous unpleasant smelling, reddish flowers.

It is also known as *Aristolochia*, *Arkmul* (Gujarati), *Birthwort*, *Eswaramuli* (Telugu), *Isharmul* (Bengali and Hindi), *Ishvari* (Sanskrit), *Isuramuli* (Tamil), *Iswaramuli* (Malayalam), and *Sapasan* (Marathi).

Warning – unlike most other related species Indian birthwort has recently been identified as potentially, significantly poisonous and in Germany it has been banned for general sale to the public. It can cause internal inflammation, vomiting and nausea – and should be avoided during pregnancy.

*Indica* means ‘of or from India or the East Indies or the Far East’.

Locally the plant has acquired a reputation for repelling snakes.

Medicinally, Indian birthwort is used to treat fevers, childish ailments and snake bites.