

Centella asiatica

[Synonyms : *Centella asiatica* var. *floridana*, *Centella biflora*, *Centella coriacea*, *Centella dusenii*, *Centella erecta*, *Centella floridana*, *Centella hirtella*, *Centella repanda*, *Centella repanda* var. *floridana*, *Centella triflora*, *Glyceria repanda*, *Hydrocotyle asiatica*, *Hydrocotyle biflora*, *Hydrocotyle brasiliensis*, *Hydrocotyle brevipedata*, *Hydrocotyle cordifolia*, *Hydrocotyle erecta*, *Hydrocotyle ficarifolia*, *Hydrocotyle ficarioides*, *Hydrocotyle inaequipes*, *Hydrocotyle nummularioides*, *Hydrocotyle reniformis*, *Hydrocotyle repanda*, *Hydrocotyle sylvicola*, *Hydrocotyle triflora*]

HYDROCOTYLE (English, German) is a trailing perennial. Native to tropical regions (including Chile, Hong Kong, Sri Lanka), and to New Zealand, it has tiny, purple-pink or white flowers.

It is also known as *Aghinya* (Assamese), *Antanan* (Sundanese), *Antanan rambat* (Sundanese), Asian pennywort, Asiatic coinwort, Asiatic pennywort, *Asiatischer Wassernabel* (German), *Barmi* (Gujarati), *Bemgsag* (Hindi), *Bevilacqua*, *Bokkudu* (Telugu), *Bor mani muni* (Assamese), *Bora thulkari* (Bengali), *Brahambuti* (Nepalese), *Brahma-manduki* (Hindi, Sanskrit), *Brahmanduki* (Hindi), *Brahmi* (Bengali, Marathi, Sanskrit, Telugu), *Brahmi buti* (Punjabi), Broken copper coin, *Bua bok* (Thai), Button grass, *Cây rau má* (Vietnamese), *Centella*, *Centelle asiatique* (French), *Centella water*, Chinese violet, *Daun kaki kuda* (Indonesian, Malay), *Divya* (Sanskrit), *Erba delle tigri* (Italian), *Fausse violette* (French), *Gagan gagan* (Javanese, Malay), *Gota kola*, *Gotu Kola* (German, Hindi, Russian, Sinhalese), *Gutu kola*, *Idrocotile* (Italian), Indian pennywort, Indian water, Indian water navelwort, *Intiansammakonputki* (Finnish), *Jalneem* (Sanskrit), *Ji xue cao* (Chinese), *Karinga* (Marathi), *Kerok batok* (Javanese, Malay), *Kholca ghayn* (Nepalese), *Khulakhudi* (Hindi), *Kodangal* (Malayalam), *Kos tekosan* (Madurese), *Kudangal* (Malayalam), *Mandookaparni* (Hindi), *Mandukaparni* (Sanskrit), *Mandukparni* (Hindi, Sanskrit), Marsh penny, Marsh pennywort, Moneywort, *Muthil* (Malayalam), *Nacley* (Telugu), *Nandukparni* (Sanskrit), Navel wort, Ovate-leaved marsh-pennywort, Ovate pennywort, *Pegaga* (Malay), *Pegagan* (Javanese, Malay), Pennyweed, *Phak waen* (Thai), *Rau má* (Vietnamese), *Rendeng* (Malay), *Rohtosammakonputki* (Finnish), *Saraswataaku* (Telugu), *Scodella d'acqua* (Italian), Sheep-rot, Small-leaved horsehoof grass, Spadeleaf, *Talapetraka* (Madagascan, Malagasy), *Thankuni* (Bengali, Hindi, Sanskrit), *Thankuria* (Bengali), Thick-leaved pennywort, *Tholkhuri* (Bengali), Tiger grass, *Trachiek kranh* (Khmer), *Tsubo kusa* (Japanese), *Vallarai* (Tamil), *Vallarai elai* (Tamil), *Vondelaga* (Kannada), *Vondelega* (Kannada), *Wassernabel* (German), Water pennywort, and White rot.

Warning – large doses are poisonous. They can cause headache, stupor, vertigo and coma. *Asiatica* means ‘of or from Asia’.

It is understood that the Sanskrit name *Mandukaparni* is a reference to a comparison of the appearance of the leaves with frogs’ claws.

In some countries such as Malaya the leaves are eaten cooked, particularly in curries, and in others they are added raw to salad.

Hydrocotyle is grown as ground cover. In Java, which is now part of Indonesia, it has been cultivated to counter soil erosion.

For some Indians hydrocotyle is held to be able to improve the memory – evidenced for many in the example allegedly provided by the elephants that also consume the plant.

Medicinally, the plant has been used internally to treat leprosy, fever, rheumatism, gastric disorders (including dysentery) insanity and some skin diseases. It has also been applied externally in poultices for some types of ulcer.

Today it is a part of treatments in Africa, India and the Philippines for tuberculosis, dysentery and venereal disorders. In addition it is not only included in ointments used to heal scars but is claimed there to be a general tonic - although this latter has still to be proved.

While in Brazil the plant is used in the treatment of some cancers. Western interest in its application to various skin conditions has been renewed and trials are taking place with particular emphasis on the prevention and/or treatment of scarring, whether acquired from burns or surgical operations.