

Cissus quadrangularis

[Synonyms : *Cissus quadrangularia*, *Cissus succulenta*, *Cissus tetragona*, *Vitis quadrangularis*, *Vitis succulenta*]

VELD GRAPE is a scrambling succulent vine. Native to tropical Africa, Arabia, South Africa and southern Asia (including eastern India and Malaysia), it has tiny green-tinged, white, yellow or pink flowers.

It is also known as *Asthisanhara* (Sanskrit), Bone setter, Common grape vine, *Hadjora* (Hindi), *Nullerootigch* (Telugu), *Piranta* (Malayalam), *Purundei codie* (Tamil), *Salala* (Arabic), *Sété yeSeytan mukecha* (Ethiopian), *Sugpon-sugpon* (Thai), *Thor-chodharo* (Gujarati), and Veldt grape.

Warning – the vine is potentially poisonous.

Quadrangularis is derived from Latin *quattuor* (four) and *angulus* (angle, corner) meaning ‘with four angles’ with reference to the stem.

Locally the leaves have been eaten as a vegetable like common sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*) and some records indicate that in Sri Lanka in the past the fleshy stems have provided food as well.

Plant sap seems to have had veterinary value. Camel drivers are said to have applied it to saddle sores on their animals – and in Guinea (tropical West Africa) stems and leaves have been fed to cattle to enhance milk yield.

Medicinally, the climber also seems to have acquired a name locally as a plant with considerable healing powers, especially where its sap is concerned. On the one hand local herbalists in the Philippines have used the sap to treat some period problems and various aural and nasal disorders. On the other hand Indian medicine seems to have embraced much more of the plant. They have used the leaves and the young shoots to ease stomach upsets and digestive problems and prescribed the sap for various period disorders and scurvy. In addition the stem has not only been used as a splint to aid healing fractures but, as part of the whole ground plant, it has also been taken as a paste to hasten this recovery – and has been taken as well as a remedy for asthma.