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Plantago ovata

[Synonyms : *Plantago brunnea*, *Plantago decumbens*, *Plantago fastigiata*, *Plantago gooddingii*, *Plantago insularis*, *Plantago insularis* var. *fastigiata*, *Plantago insularis* var. *scariosa*, *Plantago ispaghula*, *Plantago minima*]

ISPAGHULA (English, Telugu) is native from the Mediterranean to India.

It is also known as *Blondes Psyllium* (German), Blond plantain, Blond psyllium, Desert Indianwheat, *Flohkraut* (German), Indian plantago, *Indisches Psyllium* (German), *Isabgol* (Bengali, Hindi), *Isabghol* (Punjabi), *Isbghole* (Urdu), *Ishadgola* (Sanskrit), *Isabgul* (Gujarati), *Ishappukol* (Tamil), Ispaghula plantain, *Jitrocel vejčity* (Czech), *Karkata-sringi* (Malayalam), *Loppfrö* (Swedish), Spogel, Spogel seed, Spogel seed plantain, and *Vitt loppfrö* (Swedish).

Ovata is derived from Latin *ovum* (egg) meaning ‘egg-shaped’.

Like that from other close relatives the gum is used to dress muslin today and it is also used by the cosmetics industry in face-masks.

At some point it was introduced to North America and came to be known to some of the Tohono O’Odham Indians who ate the seeds. They also used the plant as fodder for their animals – and for themselves they prescribed a cold seed infusion for easing diarrhoea.

Medicinally, in India, the seeds are used to treat dysentery, diarrhoea and digestive ailments.

Ispaghula is used in the West in some proprietary pharmaceutical preparations.