

Sarcostemma acidum (Roxb.) Voigt.

Syn. *Sarcostemma brevistigma* Wt. & Arn.

Ayurvedic name	Soma
Unani name	-----
Hindi name	Somlata
English name	Moon Plant, Soma Plant
Trade name	Somlata
Parts used	Entire plant

Fam : Asclepiadaceae



Flower twig of *Sarcostemma acidum*

Morphological Characteristics

This plant is almost leafless, straggling, jointed shrub with many branches. Stem is cylindrical and 3.0-6.0 mm in diameter. It is green, pubescent in young stage and gradually turns glabrous. Internodes are 1.0-3.0 cm long. Leaves are very minute, caducous, adpressed and opposite.

Floral Characteristics

Flowers are white on sessile umbels at the end of branches. Pedicels are 6.0-8.0 mm long, slender and pubescent. Bracts are 1.5-2.0 mm long, lanceolate. Calyx is divided at the base, sub-acute and margins are revolute. Outer corona is crenately 10 lobed on the margins, inner corona lobes thick, fleshy, obtuse and longer than the staminal column, almost concealing the anthers. Staminal column is very short and pollen masses are waxy, compressed, falcately flavate. Caudicles are short and orange in colour. Ovary is glabrous with many ovules and the style apex is

shortly conical at the apex.

Distribution

Plant found in dry places of West Bengal, Rajasthan, Bihar and Peninsular India.

Climate and Soil

Plant grows in open sun light on rocky-sandy soil in arid and semi-arid areas with low rainfall. The conditions of shade and high moisture is preferable.

Propagation Material

Stem cuttings with nodes.

Agro-technique¹⁷

Nursery Technique

• Raising Propagules:

During July-September, stem cuttings with nodes are directly planted in the nursery beds. Rootex hormone is used for early rooting of cuttings.

¹⁷ Agro-technique study carried out by Jamia Hamdard, New Delhi

Planting in the Field

- **Land Preparation and Manure Application:**

Pits are dug at a distance of 1m X 1m and Farm Yard Manure is given @ of 10 kg/plant at the time of plantation as basal dose.

- **Transplanting and Optimum Spacing:**

Seedlings or stem cuttings are transplanted at a spacing of 1m X 1m between plant to plant and row to row with an optimum crop stand of approximately 100 plants/ha.

- **Irrigation Practices:**

It is a rainfed crop, irrigation is rarely required.

- **Weed Control:**

Manual weeding is required to keep the plantation weed-free.

- **Disease and Pest Control:**

No disease noticed.

Harvest Management

- **Crop Maturity and Harvesting:**

Matured plant can be harvested during November-December with the appearance of matured seeds.

- **Post-harvest Management:**

Whole plants is dried in shade and stored in gunny bags in cool-airy rooms.

- **Chemical Constituents:**

Twigs contain luperol acetate α and β -amyrin acetate and β -sitosterol.

- **Yield:**

The estimated yield of whole plant is about 9 kg fresh wt.

Therapeutic Uses

Stem is emetic and hypothermic. Root acts as antidote for snake-bite and rabid dog bites, mental diseases, sinusitis and rhinitis.