

Tabernaemontana divaricata

Pinwheelflower

Grape jasmine



Common Name | Pinwheelflower

Family Name | Apocynaceae

Native to | South to Southeast Asia

Tabernaemontana divaricata, commonly known as the pinwheelflower, is native to India and throughout South East Asia. This small evergreen shrub grows to approximately 5-6 feet tall and the waxy deep green leaves grow up to 6 inches in length. The white five-petaled pinwheel flowers bloom in small clusters on the stem tips. When broken, the stem exudes a milky latex that is toxic. However, in prescribed quantities,

parts of the plant are used to treat a variety of ailments. The root is used to treat hypertension, headaches, scabies, and toothaches. The roots, leaves, and flowers are all used to treat snake and scorpion poisoning. Non-medical uses include using the wood as incense and perfume or using the pulp around the seed to make red dyes. All parts of the plant are poisonous if used incorrectly. The presence of *Tabernaemontana divaricata* is important, as it serves as a host plant for the caterpillars of the oleander hawk-moth (*Daphnis nerii*).



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General Information

Grape jasmine is an evergreen shrub or small tree growing from 0.5 - 5 metres tall

The plant is cultivated in China as a medicinal plant and as an ornamental almost throughout the tropics and subtropics for its attractive and fragrant flowers

Cultivation Details

A plant of tropical and subtropical areas, growing at low to medium elevations

Succeeds in full sun to partial shade

Prefers a fertile, moist but well-drained soil

The plant can flower all year round

Edible Uses

None known

Medicinal

Grape jasmine is widely used as a medicinal herb in the tropics. Indeed, in India the applications in traditional medicine are so numerous that the plant may well be classified as a panacea for gastro-intestinal, urogenital and skin affections

The wood is refrigerant

The roots are astringent

A decoction is used in the treatment of diarrhoea and various abdominal complaints

An infusion is applied as a remedy for jungle fever

The roots are used in modern medicine to treat hypertension, headache, and scabies

The pounded roots are applied to sore eyes

The root is employed as a local anodyne and chewed for the relief of toothache



The pounded leaves are an ingredient of a cough medicine taken as an infusion

An infusion of the leaves is used to treat grippe (influenza)

The flowers, mixed with oil, are applied to sore eyes

The latex of the leaves is used as a cooling application for wounds to prevent inflammation

In Thailand, the plant is used as an emetic

The roots, leaves, and flowers are all used in the treatment of snake and scorpion poisoning

Agroforestry Uses:

The plant responds well to trimming and makes an attractive flowering hedge

Other Uses

The pulp around the seeds is used as a red dye

The wood is used as an incense and in perfumery

The wood is used to make charcoal