

Chocolate Vine

Akebia quinata



Akebia quinata, commonly known as chocolate vine, five-leaf chocolate vine is a woody vine in the family Lardizabalaceae (Lardizabala family). The plant is native to Japan, China and Korea, and invasive in the eastern United States from Georgia to Michigan to Massachusetts. It was introduced into the U.S. in 1845 as an ornamental where it has become established in areas with warm climates. Some of the popular common names of the plant include **Akebi**, **Eureumdeonggul**, **Mu tong fruit**, **Urum**, **Five leaf akebia**, **Chocolate Vine**, **Raisin vine** and **Five-leaf**. Genus name is the Latinized version of the Japanese name akebi for these twining shrubs. Specific epithet means having five parts, in reference to the five-leaflet palmate leaves. The plant is harvested from the wild for local use as a food, medicine and source of materials. The fruits are sometimes sold as food in local markets.

Plant Description

Chocolate vine is an invasive, vigorous, fast growing, woody, deciduous to evergreen climbing, trailing vine or groundcover plant that normally grows about 40 feet (12 m) long. The plant is found growing in woods, hedges and thickets in mountainous areas, forest margins along streams, scrub on mountain slopes, forest edges, streams banks and forest lands. It prefers light, medium, and heavy soils but requires a well-drained yet moist soil. Twigs are slender, red-brown; buds are small, imbricate, rounded to wedge-shaped and reddish-brown. Leaf scars are raised with 6 or more bundle scars. Bark is reddish to gray-brown, developing interlacing ridges and furrows.



Fruits

Fertile flowers give way to dangling clusters of 1 to 5 sausage-shaped, fleshy violet fruit pods. It is 2 to 4 inches (5 to 10 cm) long, tipped like a banana and having a lengthwise suture along one side which split open in fall to reveal small black seeds. Fruits are initially light green, turning pink to purplish with lighter speckles

and a waxy coating as they mature. Fruit starts ripen in late September to early October. When ripe the skin splits to reveal a pulpy, edible inner core that splits further to expose many (100+) imbedded black seeds in a whitish pulp. The whitish pulp is edible. Seeds are ovoid-oblong and compressed. Seed coat is brown to black and shiny.



Health benefits of Chocolate Vine

Listed below are some of the popular health benefits of chocolate vine

1. Metal disorders

Pills made with Chocolate vine seed (peeled), white poria, boxthorn seeds, Acorus tatarinowii root, poria with hostwood, platycladi seed, cortex lycii radicis, polygala tenuifolia, Chinese yam, roots of polygonatum (steamed), cinnabar and honey is taken orally with ginseng soup to treat metal disorder.

2. Eyebrow loss

Decoction of Chocolate vine seed, realgar and mastic is taken with wine to treat eyebrow loss.

3. Pain relieving

Decoction of Chocolate vine, poria cocos, ophiopogon root and pumice can be used as a remedy for hernia caused penis pain.

4. Excretory System

Decoction of cynanchum paniculatum, couch grass rhizome, akebia stem, chingma abutilon seed, soapstone, betel nut, dianthus superbus and sodium sulfate can be used to treat difficulty with urination.

A decoction of juncus effusus stem, akebia stem, dianthus superbus and plantain seed is taken orally to reduce internal fever and promote diuresis.

5. Anti-inflammatory

Chocolate vine is a very good anti-inflammatory agent which helps with arthritis, joint pain, back pain, lumbago swelling, and redness.

6. Induces Menstruation

This herb also helps to bring about monthly periods thus regulating menstruation.

7. Powerful Diuretic

Chocolate vine is a very good diuretic which helps with water retention and urinary challenges.

8. Great for Headaches

Chocolate vine also helps with headaches and migraines when taken as a tea.

9. Anti-tumor Agent

New studies are being done about using Chocolate vine for the treatment of breast and digestive tract tumors.

10. Helps with Weakness

Chocolate vine also helps with general feelings of weakness helping to strengthen the body in general.

11. Inflamed Kidneys and Stomach

Chocolate vine is a great agent for soothing away irritations of the stomach and kidneys thus helping to prevent further disease.

12. Great for the Liver

Being a good anti-inflammatory agent Chocolate vine also helps to detox and soothe the liver.



13. Antibiotic

Chocolate vine is also a good antibiotic herb for getting rid of bacterial infections.

14. High in Potassium

Chocolate vine is also high in potassium for good heart contractions and water regulation.

15. Lowers Fevers

Chocolate vine roots can be made into a tea that works well for lowering fevers.

16. Powerful Pain Reliever

The dried stems made into a tea are a very good for getting rid of pain.

17. Mouth Sores

Chocolate vine used as a tea is also great for treating mouth irritation and sores.

18. Painful Urinary Infections

Chocolate vine also works well for getting rid of painful urinary tract infections.

19. Increases Circulation

Chocolate vine increases circulation to all parts of the body including the heart.

20. Helps with Skin Challenges

This herb also works well for skin rashes, irritations, and pain and swelling of the skin.



Traditional uses and benefits of Chocolate vine

- Stems are anodyne, antifungal, anti-phlogistic, bitter, diaphoretic, diuretic, emmenagogue, febrifuge, laxative, galactagogue, resolvent, and stimulant, stomachic and vulnerary.
- When taken internally, it controls bacterial and fungal infections and is used in the treatment of urinary tract infections, lack of menstruation, to improve lactation etc.
- The fruit is anti-rheumatic, depurative, diuretic, febrifuge, stomachic and tonic.
- It has a use in traditional medicines in which urinary tract infections, scanty lactation and rheumatoid arthritis are treated.
- Fruits have been shown to have stimulatory effects on blood circulation and to have anticancer properties.
- The dried stems are used in the form of an analgesic, antiphlogistic and diuretic.
- In China, practitioners of herbal medicine also recommend this drug in the form of a diuretic as well as an anti-phlogistic

for treating conditions like amenorrhea, problems related to the breast, diabetes, dropsy, cold, headaches, general weakness, hernia, lumbago, and rheumatism, in addition to inflamed kidneys and stomach.

- The herb is also effective for inducing lactation and menstruation.
- Root of Chocolate vine is used in the form of an anti-pyretic substance.
- Dried stems can be taken internally to treat both fungal and bacterial infections.
- Roots are known for their cooling properties that help alleviate fever.
- Fruits are also noted for their anti-tumor properties and are widely recognized as a natural treatment for various types of cancer.
- Pills made from its seeds and other essential herbs are traditionally taken with ginseng soup to address different mental disorders.
- Decoction made from Chocolate vine stems may help relieve pain related to hernia.
- The herb is generally taken as a remedy to menstrual issues.
- The plant is commonly used as a remedy to various other diseases including diabetes, dropsy, cold, and headache as well as lumbago and general weakness.
- Chocolate vine improves the body's digestive and cardiac profiles.
- Chocolate vine supports both male and female reproductive health.

Culinary Uses

- Fruit can be consumed raw.
- Bitter skin of the fruit is fried and eaten.
- Leaves are used as a tea substitute.
- Rind, with a slight bitter taste, is used as vegetable, e.g., stuffed with ground meat and deep-fried.
- Soft young shoots are used in salads or for salt pickling.
- The empty pod is stuffed and deep fried.

- The fruit is also used to make wine.

Other Facts

- The plant was ranked 13th in a survey of 250 potential antifertility plants in China.
- Peeled stems are very pliable and can be used in basket making.
- Plants have sometimes been used as a ground cover, but their method of growth does not really lend themselves to this use.
- Chocolate vine is a specimen plant used in ornamental gardens and managed landscapes.
- Chocolate vine seeds produce oil used in traditional soap making in China.
- Chocolate vine has also been used in the form of a groundcover.



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