

Department of Dravyaguna Vidnyan

Plant Name: Ashwagandh



Introduction

- **Botanical Name:** *Withania somnifera* (Linn.) Dunal
- **Family:** Solanaceae
- **Description:**

Ashwagandha, also known as **Indian Ginseng or Winter Cherry**, is one of the most revered **Rasayana (rejuvenative) herbs** in Ayurveda. It is widely used for **boosting strength, enhancing immunity, relieving stress, and improving cognitive function**. The name "Ashwagandha" means "smell of a horse," indicating that the herb imparts **strength and vitality like a horse**.

Synonyms

- **Sanskrit:** Ashwagandha, Vajigandha, Balya, Varaha karni
- **Hindi:** Ashwagandha
- **Marathi:** Askandha
- **Tamil:** Amukkara
- **Telugu:** Penneru gadda
- **Kannada:** Amukura

Classification According to Ayurveda

- **Charaka:** Balya (Strength-promoting), Rasayana (Rejuvenative)
- **Sushruta:** Madhura Skandha, Tikta Skandha
- **Vagbhata:** Rasayana (Adaptogen & Anti-aging)

Morphology

- **Type:** Small woody shrub, up to 1.5 meters in height
- **Leaves:** Simple, ovate, greenish-gray, covered with fine hairs
- **Flowers:** Small, greenish-yellow, bell-shaped, present in clusters
- **Fruits:** Small, round, orange-red berries enclosed in a papery husk
- **Roots:** Long, thick, tuberous with a distinct odor

Distribution & Habitat

- Grows naturally in **dry regions** of India, Sri Lanka, Middle East, and parts of Africa.
- Commonly found in **Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Karnataka.**

Chemical Constituents

- **Withanolides** (Steroidal lactones) – Withaferin A, Withanolide D
- **Alkaloids** – Somniferine, Tropine, Anaferine
- **Flavonoids** – Kaempferol, Quercetin
- **Saponins** – Withanosides
- **Iron, Tannins, and Essential Oils**

Properties (According to Ayurveda)

- **Rasa (Taste):** Tikta (Bitter), Kashaya (Astringent), Madhura (Sweet)
- **Guna (Quality):** Laghu (Light), Snigdha (Unctuous)
- **Virya (Potency):** Ushna (Hot)
- **Vipaka (Post-digestive effect):** Madhura (Sweet)
- **Karma (Action):**
 - **Balya** (Strength-giving)
 - **Rasayana** (Rejuvenative & Anti-aging)
 - **Medhya** (Cognitive enhancer)
 - **Nidrajanana** (Promotes sleep)
 - **Shothahara** (Anti-inflammatory)
 - **Vajikarana** (Aphrodisiac)

Dosha & Dhatu Affinity

- **Dosha:** Balances **Vata** and **Kapha**, slightly increases **Pitta**
- **Dhatu:** Acts on **Rasa, Rakta, Mamsa, Meda, Majja, and Shukra**

Indications

- **Nervous Disorders:** Anxiety, Stress, Insomnia, Epilepsy
- **Muscle & Joint Health:** Arthritis, Weakness, Muscle Atrophy
- **Reproductive Health:** Infertility, Low libido, Erectile Dysfunction
- **Immunity & Energy:** Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Weak Immunity
- **Cognitive Health:** Dementia, Memory Loss, ADHD
- **Blood Disorders:** Anemia, Leukocytopenia
- **Endocrine Disorders:** Hypothyroidism, Diabetes Management
- **Respiratory Disorders:** Asthma, Chronic Cough

Parts Used

- **Roots, Leaves, Seeds, Fruits**

Dosage

- **Churna (Powder):** 3-6 g with warm milk or honey
- **Decoction (Kwatha):** 50-100 ml
- **Capsules/Tablets:** 250-500 mg
- **Arishta (Fermented formulation):** 10-20 ml
- **Ashwagandha Ghrita (Medicated Ghee):** 5-10 g

Uses

External Uses

- **Anti-inflammatory:** Paste of leaves applied to joint pain and swelling
- **Wound Healing:** Leaf paste is applied to ulcers and wounds
- **Hair Health:** Ashwagandha oil is used to strengthen hair and prevent graying

Internal Uses

- **Nervous System**
 - Acts as a brain tonic, reduces stress, improves memory
 - Used in insomnia, depression, and neurodegenerative diseases
- **Musculoskeletal System**
 - Promotes muscle growth, relieves joint pain, strengthens bones
- **Reproductive System**
 - Boosts fertility, enhances libido, and improves sperm quality
- **Endocrine System**
 - Supports thyroid and adrenal gland function
- **Immune System**
 - Enhances immunity, reduces inflammation, and fights infections

Important Yogas (Formulations)

- **Ashwagandharishta** – Used in stress, weakness, and anxiety
- **Ashwagandha Churna** – Used for energy, strength, and reproductive health
- **Ashwagandhadi Lehya** – Used for muscle building and stamina
- **Ashwagandha Ghrita** – Used for memory and neurological disorders
- **Brahmi Ashwagandha Yoga** – Used in cognitive decline and memory loss

Therapeutic Uses

1. Stress & Anxiety Management

Ashwagandha churna with warm milk at night promotes relaxation.

2. Muscle Strength & Energy Booster

Used by athletes for improving stamina and endurance.

3. Joint Pain & Arthritis

Ashwagandha oil is massaged on painful joints for relief.

4. Men's Health (Vajikarana)

Improves sperm count, testosterone levels, and enhances libido.

5. Women's Health

Regulates menstrual cycles, reduces menstrual pain, and supports fertility.

6. Memory & Cognitive Health

Used in dementia, Alzheimer's, and ADHD.

Indian Institute of Medical Sciences Ayurved College,

Gat No. 144, Opposite Delhi Public School, Behind MUHS, At Manori, Tal. Dindori,
Nashik 422 004