

 ***Leucas aspera* (Willd.) Link**  
Family: Lamiaceae



This herbaceous plant is very common, grows rampantly in open-spaces showing off its tiny white flowers, and considered as a ‘weed’ in many parts of the country. It is herbaceous and grows up to 15-60 cm with linear leaves and white flowers. It is colloquially called as drone pushpam, gophaa, chhota halkusa, thumba, ghal ghase or thunni in different cultural geographic regions. In the south of India especially in the states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra, and Kerala, the leaves and flowers are made into a paste with tamarind, lentils, and red chilies to accompany sumptuous dosas and idlis. The flowers are used to make ‘ada’ – a delicious south Indian version of crepe or pancake. Some modern culinary specialists advocate the use of the decoction of the leaves with ginger in the form of gravy due to the anti-oxidative properties of the plant. Like southern part, the plant is also very popular among peoples of the north and north-east states of India. Leaves and shoots are used as vegetables either boiled or consumed with spices among different tribes. Nutritional evaluation revealed the plant is loaded with multiple key vitamins (ascorbic acid, riboflavin, thiamin, niacin and beta-carotene), minerals (calcium, potassium, magnesium and phosphorous) and micronutrients (manganese, zinc and iron).

