
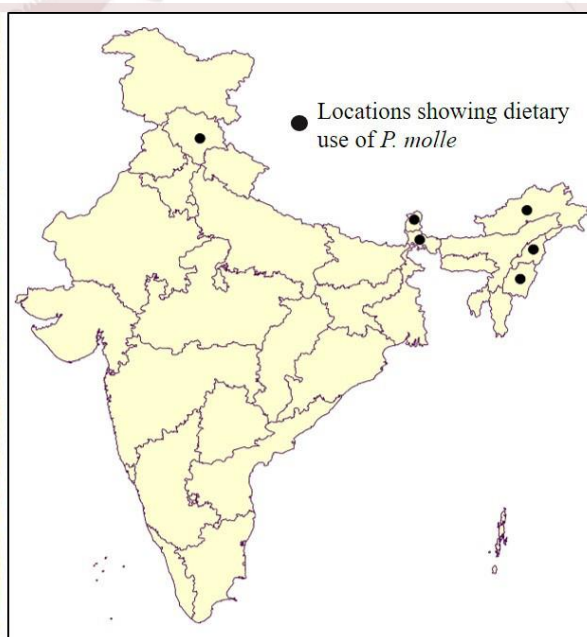
 ***Polygonum molle* (Blume) D. Don** 
Family – Polygonaceae

The plant is a native of the Himalayas, but naturalized or cultivated in the Nilgiri tracts of the Western Ghat. It is more of a temperate weed with high oxalic acid content. The culinary practice with this plant is widely distributed in the Himalayan states of the country. The leaves can be cooked well before consuming to reduce the oxalic acid content. Young shoots are cooked to make side dishes along with other spices. As the entire plant has an astringent property, care should be taken in consuming the plant parts. The leaves are cooked with other herbs for the mild acidic taste. In Arunachal Pradesh, Nyishi tribes consume the raw tender stems and it is known as *Bongkung*. The ripe fruits are sweet and taken directly. In Manipur, it is a local delicacy especially in summer season, commonly known as *Tharam*. It is usually cooked and taken with dried fish, meat and fermented soya bean. In Sikkim, the tender parts of the plant are edible and a common ingredient for pickles. The practice is available in West Bengal too especially across Himalayan foothill area. Young tender stem and leaves are directly consumed or used in salad/chutney preparation. Similarly, in the Western Himalayan state of Himachal Pradesh, tender shoots are used for quenching thirst. Despite widespread use among the indigenous communities the plant is yet to be introduced in the mainstream food sector.



Photo: Tabish/Flowers of India



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