

***Buddleja asiatica* Lour.**

Family: Scrophulariaceae

A shrubby plant popularly known as “Asiatic butterfly bush”, *Buddleja asiatica* is attractive for its white fragrant flowers and its colourful fluttering visitors. Distributed across the Himalayan tracts, the plant is a well-known neighbour of the mountain communities. In Himachal Pradesh, locally known as *Neemda*, the flowers and leaves are edible in diverse ways. Both fresh and dried leaves are used in preparing herbal tea and the local alcoholic beverage, *Neemda lugadi* (leaves with rice in fermented form). Flowers are ingredients for fried snacks like *Pakora*, *Kachru*, etc. Likewise, Dima Hasao people in the north-eastern states of Assam and Nagaland, use the leaves for preparing rice wine (*Judima*). Moving further to Meghalaya, we observe that the flowers are consumed as vegetables after cooking and the bark are chewed as mouth fresheners. Quite similar to the existing practices in north-east states, Sikkimese people also use the tender leaves as vegetable.

The leaves are a good source of calcium and phosphorus. Moreover, important minerals like zinc, iron, copper, and manganese are also reported from this plant that ensures its high therapeutic potential.

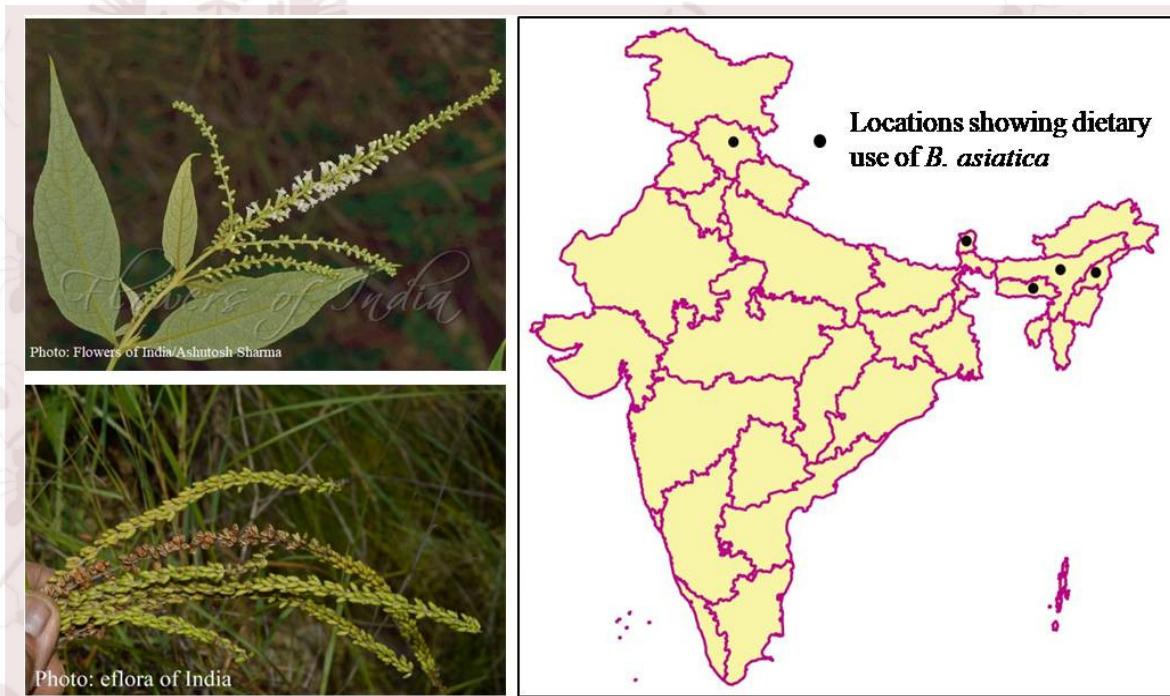


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