

BANAFSHA: A SUPERNATURAL HERB

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Herbs and herb-derived medicines played a crucial role in health and disease management for many centuries and merely three quarters of the world population rely on herbal and traditional medicines as a basis for primary health care center. The word herb as derived from the Latin word, called “herba” and old French word “herbe” refers to any part of the plant like fruit, seed, stem, bark, flower, leaf, stigma or a root as well as a non-woody plant. The medicinal plants were used as food, flavonoid, medicine or perfume and also in certain spiritual activities. Many plants were known to produce biologically active substance, some of which were related to special flavour or taste, and found useful as antioxidants, and/or antimicrobial agents. The market for medical plants in India stood at Rs. 4.2 billion (US\$ 56.6 million) in 2019 and is expected to increase at a CAGR 38.5% to Rs. 14 billion (US\$ 188.6 million) by 2026. Cultivation of medicinal plants in a commercial mode is one of the most profitable agri-business for farmers in India and one with sufficient land and knowledge of herb marketing can earn high income with moderate investment. Cultivation of medicinal herbs such as *shankhapushpi*, *atis*, *kuth*, *katki*, *kapikachhu* and *karanja* are changing the Indian agrarian ayurvedic scenes and providing extraordinary opportunities for farmers to increase their incomes. According to the traditional treatment health centre, there are 25 significant medicinal plants that are always in full demand which include

Indian *Barberry*, *Liquorice*, *Bael*, *Isabgol*, *Atis*, *Guggal*, *Kerth*, *Aonla*, *Chandan*, *Senna*, *Baiberang*, Long Pepper, *Brahmi*, *Jatamansi*, and *Madhunashini*, *Kalmegh*, *Satavari*, *Ashwagandha*, *Chirata*, *Katki*, *Shankhpushpi*, *Ashoka*, *Giloe*, *Kokum* and *Safed Musli* etc.

BANAFSHA: A MEDICINAL PLANT

A medicinal plant belongs to Violaceae family commonly called as Sweet Violet, English Violet, Common Violet or Garden Violet which is used since golden times for treating several diseases both in Unani and Ayurvedic system of medicine. The flowers of the plant are commonly known as Gulbanafsha. It is a hardy herbaceous, perennial flowering plant with heart shaped leaves often with scalloped or slightly serrated edges are dark green, smooth or sometimes downy underneath, and grow in a rosette at the base of the plant. The roots of the plant are creepy and send out runners with flowers varying from deep purple or blue to pinkish or even yellow whitish. This medicinal plant can be consumed in three form as dried flowers, the aerial parts without flowers and dried aerial parts of herbs. All parts of the plants are used as medicinal

purpose and has been proven as, sedative, diuretic, anti-asthmatic, laxative, anti-dyslipidemic, antihypertensive, antibacterial, antidiabetic, antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, antipyretic, hepatoprotective, anticancer, cytotoxic, anti-tubercular, and antifungal properties. It is used as a single drug or as an ingredient in various formulations viz. syrup, decoction, infusion, confection, semisolid preparations, oil and pill. It is grown in Europe and Asia, but also been introduced to North America and Australia. This herb is indigenous to India and found in Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh-Chamba & Kangra, and Kumaon hills in Uttrakand. The Banafsha is available in commerce in three forms: (1) the dried aerial parts of the herb, viz, the stems, leaves and flowers (Kashmiri Banafsha); (2) only the dried flowers (Gul-Banafsha); and (3) the aerial parts without flowers (Barge banafsha).

BENEFITS OF BANAFSHA

Viola odorata contains different types of chemical constituents including flavonoid, glycosides, alkaloids, steroids, terpenes, saponins and tannins. It is used in Unani medicine for treating respiratory ailments, bronchitis, whooping cough, fever, skin conditions, cystitis, throat infection and rheumatism due to its anti-inflammatory, diaphoretic, diuretic, emollient, expectorant, antipyretic and laxative properties. It contains salicylic acid which is used to make aspirin hence effective for the treatment of headaches, migraine, and insomnia. It is the rich source of sodium, calcium, magnesium, aluminum, silicon, chloride and iron. The whole plant; petals, flowers, leaves, seeds and roots of the *Viola odorata* are used for medicinal purpose.

1. It neutralizes the bile and relieve fever, quinch thirst and reduces blood pressure and softens the chest and relieves heart burn.
2. Smelling fresh banafsha can relieve headache by increased heat.
3. Consuming powder of flowers or gulkand can helps to relieve constipation
4. The petals of flower are used in preparation of sharbat(syrup) which is used a home remedy for cough, sore throat, ailments of infants and hoarseness in voice.
5. It is beneficial in mucus discharge from nose.
6. Banafsha oil (Roghan Banafsha) liquify the impacted wax in the ear and it is effective in cough by apply over the chest, especially in children.
7. Oil can be applied to treat hair fall, cures skin wounds and is also helpful to treat dryness of skin
8. The oil of banafsha can be used to treat hairfall, cure skin wounds and also to treat dryness of skin.
9. It dissolves tumor and abnormal growth.
10. It reduces nervous tension, stress, and insomnia.

