

## *Coptis teeta*

No Image

**Family:** Ranunculaceae

**Local/common names:** Yunlian, Teeta (Assamese and Bengali), Haladiovachanag (Gujarati), Mamira (Hindi), Tita, Arong, Pawa (Mishmi), Pitmula, Mahatita (Sanskrit)

**Trade name:** Golden thread

**Profile:**

*Coptis teeta* is a perennial, herbaceous plant, reportedly endemic to Arunachal Pradesh. The rhizome of *Coptis teeta* is the medicinally important part as it produces a bitter principle, which is useful as a tonic and febrifuge, especially in intermittent fever. The plant has applications in Ayurveda, Unani and Sidha systems of medicine. Unsustainable, commercial exploitation of the plant for international trade is the main reason for its critically endangered status. The species is also categorized within the list of banned export item unless accompanied by a certificate of origin. The state forest department of Arunachal Pradesh has taken some steps to protect the species by in situ conservation in Namdhapa Biosphere Reserve.

**Habitat and ecology:** The plant occurs in moist, tropical, damp, shady, forest slopes at an altitudinal range of 2500-3000 m. It is endemic to Arunachal Pradesh in India and is found in some parts of Darjeeling in West Bengal and Sikkim. In Arunachal Pradesh, it has been recorded in the districts of Lohit, Dibang valley, Siang and Upper Subansiri. It grows naturally just below the snow line. Recently, the plant has been reported from Tibet also.

**Morphology:** It is a perennial herb with a woody rootstock. The rhizomes are yellowish-brown externally and yellow to golden yellow in colour internally with a jointed appearance. The leaves are all radical or on terretely dissected, glabrous erect stem. The petiole is 15-30 cm long. The leaflets are ovate and lanceolate, 5-8 cm long and incised with a few flowers on leafless slender scapes. The herb has white, very small, pedicelled leafy bracts. The sepals are oblong or lanceolate and acute. The petals are narrow, ligulate and shorter than the sepals. There are 6-8 follicles in number and stalked. The seeds are black and many in number.

**Distinguishing features:** The species is an evergreen, perennial having yellowish-brown rhizomes with a jointed appearance and shiny, slippery leaves. It has very small, white flowers with slender scapes and white, pedicelled bracts.

**Life cycle:** Flowering takes place from July-August whereas fruiting takes place from August-September.

**Uses:** The plant has several medicinal uses. It is useful in treating backache, dysentery, cuts, wounds, stomach problem, cholera, diarrhoea, eye complaints and intermittent fever. It regulates blood pressure and is also helpful in anti-tumour and antibacterial activities.

**Market rate:** Data not available