

## *Datura stramonium*



**Family:** Solanaceae

**Local/common names:**  
Datura, Safed dhatura,  
Dhouturo, Thorn apple, ditch  
weed, stink weed, devil's  
trumpet, devil's snare, Korean  
morning glory

**Trade name:** Dhatura

**Profile:**

The genus *Datura* belongs to the family Solanaceae. *Datura stramonium* is a common weed containing tropane alkaloids that have hallucinogenic properties which have lent it the name of 'mad nightshade'. The active ingredients in the plant are atropine, hyoscyamine and scopolamine which are classified as deliriant or anticholinergics. A native of Central America or India, this plant is considered to have mystical properties and was used smoked by Hindu ascetics with *Cannabis*.

**Habitat and ecology:** The plant is found throughout the world except in the colder arctic regions. In the Himalayas, it is found up to a height of 2700 m. It predominantly grows in wastelands and near villages. The species naturally grows in Jogindernagar, Bagi-Odari, Nauni and Solan areas of Himachal Pradesh in India.

**Morphology:** It is an annual, erect, nearly glabrous, tall, robust herb with broad, ovate, coarsely and irregularly lobed and toothed leaves. The flowers are white and single, borne on short usually axillary stalks, 7.5-15 cm long. The tubular capsules are ovoid, covered with rigid, sharp prickles and surrounded at the base by an enlarged calyx.

**Distinguishing features:** The plant has forking and purple stems with large leaves and the flowers are trumpet-shaped, white to purple, with a fragrance like *Mirabilis jalapa*. The fruits are oval and covered in prickles.

**Life cycle:** The plants live up to one year with flowering and fruiting period extends from March-September.

**Uses:** The drug is anodyne and narcotic which affects the sympathetic nervous system but does not affect the motor or sensory nerves. The leaves are used in the treatment of asthma. It is used to control salivation, muscular rigidity and the tremors in Parkinsonism. The plant and its preparations are used to relieve spasm of the bronchioles in asthma. It is also useful in dysmenorrhoea, neuralgia and sciatica. It has been reported to be useful in boils, breast inflammation caused by excessive formation of milk, salivation, travel sickness and diarrhoea. The local application of the *Datura* ointment gives relief in haemorrhoids, fissures and other painful diseases of the rectum.

**Market rate:** Data not available