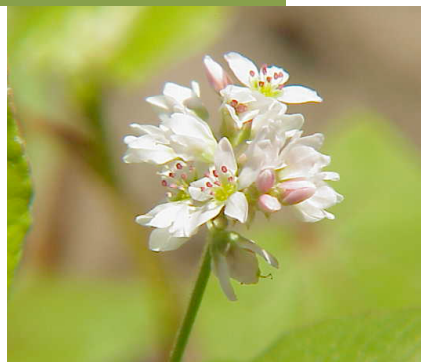


# *Fagopyrum esculentum*



**Family:** Polygonaceae

**Local/common names:**  
Buckwheat, Ogla, Kathu

**Trade name:** Data not available

**Profile:**

*Fagopyrum esculentum* (common buckwheat) is a member of Polygonaceae. The three-sided achenes resemble miniature nuts from the beech tree (*Fagus*), which has led to the German name "buchweizen" (beech-wheat) which became corrupted to the present name of buckwheat. However, buckwheat is not related to wheat and was first domesticated and cultivated in southeast Asia, and spread from there to Europe, Central Asia and Tibet. It is the world's highest elevation domesticate, being cultivated in Yunan on the edge of the Tibetan plateau. Common buckwheat is by far the most important buckwheat species, economically, accounting for over 90% of the world's buckwheat production.

**Habitat and ecology:** It is a perennial herb occurring at an altitudinal range of 2000-4400 m. It is widely cultivated in Himalayas. It is distributed from Pakistan to Bhutan across all the Himalayan states.

**Morphology:** The plant is a slender, erect annual with small leaves and inflorescence. The leaves have a triangular heart shaped blade, mostly as long as broad, and with rounded or triangular basal lobes. The lower leaves are stalked and the upper leaves are stalkless. The stem is unbranched and often tinged with red at maturity.

**Distinguishing features:** It is an erect annual with heart shaped leaves and pink flowers, in terminal branched clusters.

**Life cycle:** Flowering and fruiting takes place from June-September.

**Uses:** The plant has assumed great medicinal importance due to the presence of the glucoside rutin that is used in modern medicine as an anti-haemorrhagic. A decoction of the root is used to treat rheumatic pains, lung diseases and typhoid while the juice is useful in curing urinary disorders. Rutin is also valued as a cure for capillary fragility of the heart. Other parts of the plant are also useful. The fruits are ground to make flour. The biological value of the protein from this plant is nearly equal to that of egg. The nectar from buckwheat flowers is used to make a dark colored honey. Buckwheat is sometimes used as a green manure and also as a feed for cattle.

**Market rate:** Data not available