

# *Juniperus recurva*



**Family:** Cupressaceae

**Local/common names:**  
Drooping Juniper, Shur,  
Devidiar

**Trade name:** Thelu, Dhoop

**Profile:**

*Juniperus recurva* is a species native to the Himalayas. The plant has two varieties namely *J. r. recurva* (found throughout its range) and *J. r. coxii* (which is found in the eastern Himalayas). The species is cultivated in Europe as an ornamental plant.

**Habitat and ecology:** *Juniperus recurva* is common in the dry-arid slopes of Himalayas from Pakistan to Southwest China at an altitudinal range of 2500-4500 m. It is distributed almost throughout the temperate and alpine Himalayas. In India, the plant is found in the districts of Kinnaur and Shimla, Sirmour, Chamba, Kangra and Lahaul and Spiti in Himachal Pradesh, the Kumaon region in Uttarakhand and in Arunachal Pradesh. The plant grows well in most soils if they are well drained, preferring a neutral or slightly alkaline soil. It grows in humid sheltered areas with high rainfall.

**Morphology:** It is a medium-sized shrub with irregular branching. The ultimate branches curve separately in various directions, giving the plant its name. It has loosely overlapping 6-8 mm long scaly leaves in whorls of three. The male cones have imbricate scales while the female cones have 4-6 scales. The flowers are dioecious and are pollinated by wind. The fruits are sub-globose and resinous, purplish brown to black when ripe.

**Distinguishing features:** The ultimate branches of the shrub are curved and exhibit a lax growth. The fruits are purplish brown and shine when ripe.

**Life cycle:** Flowering and fruiting takes place between June and September. It is in leaf all year, and the seeds ripen in October.

**Use:** The roots, leaves and twigs of *Juniperus recurva* are used in the preparation of essence and the wood is valued as a timber for making furniture. The wood is also suitable for making pencils. Local communities use the wood for fuel. In Burma, the wood is used to make coffins. Ethyl alcohol extract of the aerial parts of the plant have anti-cancer properties. The fruits are eaten raw or cooked. The leaves contain about 1.7% essential oil.

**Market rate:** The fruits are sold at Rs.20-22 per kg. Dhoop lakkar (the branches and twigs used as essence) is sold at Rs.50 per kg.