

Megacarpaea polyandra

No Image

Family: Brassicaceae

Local/common names:
Barmola, Rooki, Banpalak

Trade name: Rooki

Profile:

Megacarpia polyandra is a robust perennial herbaceous member of the family Brassicaceae. The plant is known as *Barmola* in the Indian traditional medicine system and its rhizomes or roots are considered to be the medicinally important. *Megacarpaea polyandra* is the only species in the Brassicaceae with flowers having more than six stamens. The status of the plant has become vulnerable due to heavy and unsustainable extraction from the wild. Hence, the wild harvest of the species has been banned in India. Although cultivation technology has been worked out no commercial cultivation has been reported from any corner of India.

Habitat and ecology: It is found generally in the wild near the timberline and in moraines and also in the sub-alpine and alpine meadows and open forests, between the altitudes of 2800-3500 m. It grows well in moist and shady places. The plant is distributed in Eastern Asia in the Himalayas from Kashmir to Central Nepal.

Morphology: *Megacarpaea polyandra* is a robust perennial, large coarse fleshy herb that is 1.5-2.5 m in height. The stem is stout and hollow. The leaves are large and round in shape. They are linear and entire with deeply pinnate lobes. The roots are tuberous. The flowers are yellow or white in a large terminal dense branched cluster. Fruits are 3.5-5 cm broad, in paired broadly winged one-seeded units.

Distinguishing features: *Megacarpaea polyandra* has more than six stamens and hence, it can be distinguished from the other species of the Brassicaceae family.

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

Uses: Roots are used as medicine against fever, a febrifuge and tonic. Decoctions of the root are used to cure stomach pain and dysentery. The leaves are edible and used as a vegetable. Locally, dry leaves are fried with ghee for the treatment of dysentery.

Market rate: Data not available