

# *Nardostachys grandiflora*

No Image

**Family:** Valerianaceae

**Local/common names:**

Muskroot, Indian spikenard, Jatamansi, Balchir, (Hindi and Punjabi), Tapaswini (Sanskrit), Bhutijatt, Kukilipot (Kashmiri), Masi (Garwhal), Pampe (Bhutan), Haswa, Naswa (Nepal)

**Trade name:** Jatamansi, Bhutjata

**Profile:**

It is considered to be among one of the most attractive alpine plants with rose-purple to whitish flowers. The plant has a very pungent smell. The plant is valued for its rhizomes which have important medicinal uses.

**Habitat and ecology:** The perennial herb is found in the alpine Himalayas at altitudes ranging from 3000-4800 m. It is found on moist rocks or on stones and open slopes. The herb is found from Himachal Pradesh to Sikkim and Bhutan. In Himachal Pradesh, this plant is found in alpine rocky slopes in Manjiban, Jakha-Kanda and Tangankhai.

**Morphology:** It is an erect perennial herb, 10-60 cm in height, with a deeply penetrating stout taproot covered with tail-like brown aromatic fibres originating from the petioles of the withered leaves. The leaves are radical in nature, narrow, longitudinally nerved, 10-20 cm long and 1.5-2.5 cm broad. The flowers are creamy white, rosy or pale pink in appearance, tubular having a five lobed corolla tube. The flower heads are usually one to five. The fruits are about 4 mm long, either ovate or flattened in outline and covered with minute hairs. It has a heavy aromatic odour.

**Distinguishing features:** It is considered to be among one of the most attractive alpine plants with rose-purple to whitish flowers in dense heads borne in terminal or often branched clusters. The whole plant has a very distinct lingering smell.

**Life cycle:** The juvenile phase (vegetative growth phase) of the plant is 3-5 years followed by a reproductive phase under natural conditions. Flowering of the plant takes place during July-August and seed maturation takes place in September-October.

**Uses:** The extract from the rhizomes is used as a tonic, stimulant, antispasmodic, diuretic, deobstruent, emmenagogue, stomachic and laxative. It has also found use in the treatment of epilepsy, hysteria, heart palpitation, leprosy, respiratory disorders, nervousness and cholera. It is known to promote hair growth, darken the hair and is hence also an ingredient in the preparation of hair oil. The essential oil extracted from it is used in perfuming medicinal syrups and liquids. The roots have properties to make the brain sharper.

**Market rate:** The price of *Nardostachys grandiflora* is Rs.100/- per kg of dried rhizome.