

Polygonum molle

No Image

Family: Polygonaceae

Local/common names:

Kochomah (Assam),
Kandyeopam in Lepcha and
Thotne, Tuknu and Patusua
(Nepal)

Trade name: Data not
available

Profile:

Polygonum molle is member of the genus *Polygonum*, which belongs to buckwheat family Polygonaceae. The name may be derived from the Greek words *poly* meaning "many" and *gonu* meaning "knee" is in reference to the swollen jointed stem nodes. *Polygonum molle* is an edible as well as medicinal herb found as a ground cover species. The species is highly important for its soil stabilization value. In Nepal the species has become endangered because of unsustainable extraction from the forests for edible purpose as it has high demand in the market.

Habitat and ecology: The plant is found in forest, scrub and damp ground, slopes and in valleys. The species is distributed at an elevation range from 1200-3500 m from Eastern Asia to Indian Himalayas and southwest China. The species is available in Bhutan, India, Indonesia, northern Myanmar, Nepal, Sikkim and Thailand. In India the species is found in Tawang district of Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Joshimath of Uttarakhand, Lahaul and Spiti and Chamba districts of Himachal Pradesh.

Morphology: It is an herb with erect stems that can grow up to 1-1.5 m tall. The plant is much branched and hirsute or glabrous. The leaves are entire, petiolate, densely pubescent or glabrous with the leaf blade green but abaxially light green, elliptic to lanceolate with an acuminate apex and both surfaces glabrous. The inflorescence is spreading, paniculate and large. The rachis and branches are densely pubescent or glabrous and the bracts are ovate. The flowers are white with a white, 5-parted perianth, while the tepals are elliptic, accrescent. The fruits are achenes, black, shiny, ovoid slightly exceeding perianth.

Distinguishing features: The herb has an erect to ascending stem with jointed swollen nodes, entire acuminate leaves and large white flowers.

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

Uses: The seeds and young shoots are used in either raw or cooked form. The leaves of are nutritious and beneficial if eaten in moderate quantities. The whole plant is astringent and is used to treat diarrhoea. The plant is also an efficient soil binder and covers the ground very well. It is a very fast growing plant and used to revegetate and stabilize landslips.

Market rate: Data not available