

# *Solanum khasianum*

No Image

**Family:** Solanaceae

**Local/common names:**  
Indian nightshade, Tropical  
soda apple, Chunda  
(Malayalam), Kotahi Begena  
(Bengali)

**Trade name:** Data not  
available

**Profile:**

*Solanum kbasianum* is a hardy shrub belonging to the family Solanaceae. The species grows in a wide range of agro-climatic conditions. The genus *Solanum* is a large genus consisting of annual and perennial plants, forbs, vines, sub-shrubs, shrubs and small trees. The Solanaceae family consists of 90 genera with 3000-4000 species. The genus *Solanum* alone has 1250-1700 species. This family shows a wide difference in habitat, distribution as well as morphology.

**Habitat and ecology:** It is a weed occurring in agricultural fields, groves, pastures, ditches, disturbed sites and natural areas. It primarily invades pastures, fields and parks but also has the potential to invade open forest and other natural areas. The species requires sandy loam, well-drained sunny areas to grow. It has a wide distribution range from tropical to temperate regions. In India, it is found distributed in Khasi, Jaintia and Naga Hills of Assam and Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, West Bengal, Orissa and the upper Gangatic plains. The species is common in Himachal Pradesh in wastelands, ravines and near habitations.

**Morphology:** It is a perennial, shrubby forb that grows up to 2 m in height. The leaves are broad and resemble the leaves of fig or oak. The entire plant is armed with 1.5-2 cm long straight prickles.

**Distinguishing features:** The plant can be recognized by its fruit, which is a mottled mix of whitish and dark greens that resemble a watermelon. Mature fruits are yellow in colour and 2-4 cm in diameter.

**Life cycle:** Data not available

**Uses:** Berries are a rich source of the alkaloid, solasodine (1.0-1.25%), which is used in the manufacture of corticosteroid hormones. Solasodine is also used in the manufacture of several drugs, the hormones of which are used as active ingredients in contraceptive pills. The plant is also an important source of the herbal steroid diasogenin.

**Market rate:** Dried herb is sold at the rate of Rs.25-35/- per kg whereas dried seeds at the rate of Rs.150-200/- per kg.