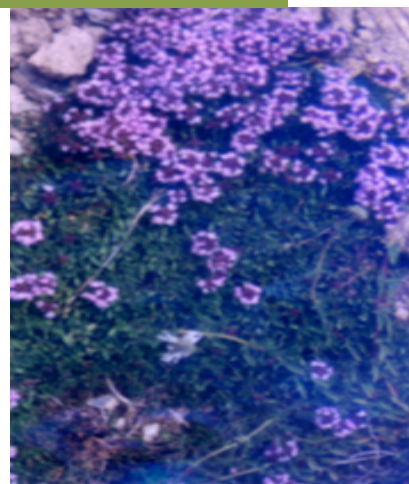


Thymus serpyllum



Family: Labiatae /
Lamiaceae

**Local/common
names:** Wild Thyme,
Creeping thyme,
Banajwain (Hindi),
Masho, Marizha
(Punjabi), Lepto, Lepte,
Pangduma, Padumba,
Kochi, Masha (Lahaul)

Trade name: Banajwain

Profile:

Thymus serpyllum, also known as wild thyme can be distinguished by its purple flowers, which give colour to the Himalayan hillsides when they are in bloom in the months of September and October. The plant is known to be a drought tolerant species and is valued for its medicinal properties.

Habitat and ecology: The plant is found in the Western and Central Himalayan belt at an altitudinal range of 1500-4500 m and is frequent on open rocky slopes. In Himachal Pradesh, it is found in the Lahaul region in Barbog (3250-3320 m), Goshal, Mooling (3000-3100 m), Keylong (3250-3600 m), Tandi (3340-3400 m), Upper Kullong (3520-3750 m), Patsoh (3140-3337 m) and Rashal (2950-3070 m), in the Spiti region in Hansa (3805-3880 m) and Nako (3000-3250 m) and Roopa (3798 m) in Kinnaur. In Uttarakhand, it is found in Uttarkashi, Kedartal (3700-4720 m), Pithoragarh and Martoli (3250-4210 m).

Morphology: It is a small aromatic, branched, hairy prostrate and evergreen perennial herb growing up to 10-25 cm in height. It effectively covers the ground, forming dense mats. The rootstock is woody and the leaves nearly sessile. The flowers are polygamous, small, purple and found in small whorls crowded in short terminal spikes. The calyx is hairy and two-lipped, and the corolla-tube is as long as the calyx. The plant is pungent in taste.

Distinguishing features: This is a strongly aromatic, prostrate, hairy herb with tiny purple flowers.

Life cycle: Flowering and fruiting of the plant takes place between April and September.

Uses: The herb possesses anti-spasmodic, antiseptic, expectorant, carminative and stimulating properties. The leaves and floral shoots are employed for the treatment of whooping cough, epilepsy, suppression of urine and menstrual catarrh. The leaves are used in biliousness and their juice is applied over bald patches of alopecia. The seeds are considered anti-febrile and antihelminthic. The plant is used as an agent to expel phlegm and counter spasmodic pains. Thymol, which is the active principle, possesses antifungal and antibacterial properties. The plant is used in Lahaul to cure post-natal problems. It is a well-known remedy in the hills for stomach complaints as well as chronic cough and cold. The oil obtained from this plant is sometimes applied in toothache. The dried leaves and flowers are also used as condiments in cooking. It is a popular remedy in the hills for stomach complaints, cough and colds. An infusion of the leaves with jaggery acts as a diuretic. The oil is sometimes applied as a remedy in toothache. The leaves are also used to reduce excessive bile secretion and their juice is applied over bald patches in cases of alopecia or hair loss. The seeds are used to kill hookworms.

Market rate: The current market rate is Rs.2/- per kg