

364. *WITHANIA SOMNIFERUM* (L.) Dunal (SOLANACEAE) — Ashwagandha

Seeds are used as a vegetable rennet to coagulate milk.² Tender shoots are said to serve as a vegetable in India. Seeds are used as a masticatory. Withaferin A shows antiarthritic, antibiotic, antimutagenic, antitumor, and fungicidal activity. Withaferin B is antimutagenic. The drug is sedative, hypnotic, laxative, and diuretic, fruits analgesic, diuretic, proteolytic, and sedative.

Reported to be abortifacient, amebicide, anodyne, bactericide, contraceptive, diuretic, emmenagogue, fungicide, narcotic, pediculicide, poison, sedative, spasmolytic, tonic, ashwagandha is a folk remedy for adenopathy, anthrax, arthritis, asthma, bronchitis, cancer, candida, cold, cough, cystitis, debility, diarrhea, dropsy, dyspepsia, erysipelas, fever, furuncle, gynecopathy, hiccups, hypertension, inflammation, lumbago, marasmus, nausea, piles, proctitis, psoriasis, rheumatism, ringworm, scabies, senility, smallpox, sores, syphilis, tuberculosis, tumors, typhoid, uterosis, and wounds.^{3,32,33} Steeped in warm castor oil, the leaves are applied to carbuncles, inflammations, and swellings.² Bruised berries are rubbed onto ringworm.¹ Lesotho natives take the root decoction for colds and chills. The bark infusion is taken for asthma and applied topically to bedsores. Zulu give an enema of decorticated root to feverish infants. Tanganyikans use the root as a sexual stimulant and ebolic. Masai use the leaf juice for conjunctivitis. Alcoholic preparations of the plant have been used in alcoholism, emphysema, and pulmonary tuberculosis.