Punarnava

*Boerhaavia diffusa* Linn.

**Family: Nyctaginaceae**

A very variable, diffusely branched, pubescent or glabrous, prostrate herb. Root – stock stout, fusiform, woody; stems creeping, often purplish, swollen at the nodes; oblong-cordate, entire or sinuate, usually whitish and smooth beneath and rough green on upper surface; flowers red, pink or white, in small umbels arranged pubescent, five-ribbed, viscid, glandular anthocarps.

**Distribution:** It is abundantly occurring as a weed during the rains throughout India, up to an altitude of 2,000m in Himalayas. It is cultivated in some extent in West Bengal.

**Vernacular names:**

Sanskrit – Punarnava, Shotagni

English – Sreading hog weed

Hindi – Gandhaparna, Thikri, Sant

Kannada – Sanadika, Gonajali

Telugu – Attatamamidi

Tamil – Talutama

Malayalam – Tamilama, Talutama

Gujarati – Vakha-khaparo

**Cultivation:**

**Interculture and pruning:**

**Manure and fertilizer:**

**Plant protection:**

**Harvesting and yield:**
**Varieties:** Its of two kinds, one with red flower is known as Rakta punarnava and the other with white flower called Sweta punaranava.

**Parts used:** Whole plant

**Medicinal uses:**

The plant is bitter, stomachic, laxative, diuretic, expectorant, diaphoretic and emetic. Root is purgative, anthelmintic and febrifuge. The white variety is efficient in oedema, anaemia, heart diseases, cough and intestinal colic. The red variety is beneficial in oedema, haemorrhage, anaemia and biliousness. The paste prepared out of plant is applied in leprosy and skin diseases and as a decoction in stone in the kidney and in oedema. Local application of the root paste is beneficial in rat-bite, diseases of eye, insomnia and rheumatism. The plant juice is used in treatment of jaundice, cirrhosis of liver, ascites, urethrities and asthma. Juice of leaves with honey is dropped into the eyes in chronic ophthalmia. It is given internally as a blood purifier and to relieve muscular pain.

The drug proved useful as a haematinic and growth promoter in children fed with milk fortified with it. Punarnavastaka kashyam is given in general anasarca with astities, nephritic syndrome, cough, jaundice, difficulty in breathing etc. Punarnava Madura is useful in anaemia, oedema. Punarvadi kashayam is beneficial in burning micturation, scanty urine, oedema and urinary calculi. The root decoction is indicated in gonorrhea and other internal inflammatory disorders.