

Mimosa pudica



Clade: Tracheophytes
Order: Fabales
Family: Fabaceae
Subfamily: Mimosoideae
Genus: Mimosa
Species: Mimosa pudica

Common Names

Hindi: Lajwanti, Chhuimui

Marathi: Lajalu

Tamil: Thottalsinungi

Telugu: Attipatti

Malayalam: Thottavanji

Kannada: Muttithakannu

General Features of Mimosa pudica

1. Sensitivity and Movement:

Thigmotactic Movements: Mimosa pudica is renowned for its rapid response to touch. When touched, the leaves fold inward and droop, a movement thought to protect the plant from harm and reduce water loss.

Nyctinasty Movements: The plant also exhibits sleep movements, where the leaves close during darkness and reopen in light.

2. Morphology:

Leaves: The leaves are compound, with small leaflets arranged in pairs along the central stem. Each leaflet is oblong and delicate.

Stems: The stems are slender and may have small, prickly thorns. They are usually green or reddish in color.

Flowers: Mimosa pudica produces small, pink, or lavender flower heads. These globular inflorescences are made up of many tiny individual flowers.

Seeds: The plant produces small seed pods that contain several seeds. When mature, the pods break open, dispersing the seeds.

3. Habitat:

Mimosa pudica is native to South and Central America but has become a pantropical weed. It thrives in warm, tropical climates and is often found in disturbed areas such as roadsides, gardens, and fields.

4. Growth:

It is a creeping annual or perennial herb. The plant can spread rapidly in suitable conditions, often forming dense mats.

5. Reproduction:

Sexual Reproduction: *Mimosa pudica* reproduces through seeds.

Asexual Reproduction: The plant can also propagate vegetative through root fragments, allowing it to spread efficiently.

6. Chemical Compounds:

The plant contains several bioactive compounds, including alkaloids, flavonoids, tannins, and saponins. These compounds contribute to its medicinal properties.

7. Ecological Role:

Soil Health: As a member of the legume family, *Mimosa pudica* can fix nitrogen in the soil, enhancing soil fertility.

Invasive Potential: In some regions, it is considered invasive due to its rapid growth and ability to outcompete native vegetation.

Medicinal Uses

Mimosa pudica, commonly known as the "sensitive plant" or "touchmenot," has various medicinal uses in traditional medicine:

- 1. Wound Healing:** The plant's leaves and roots are used to promote wound healing.
- 2. Antiinflammatory:** It has antiinflammatory properties and is used to treat inflammations.
- 3. Antimicrobial:** Extracts from the plant have antimicrobial properties that help fight infections.
- 4. Pain Relief:** It is used to relieve pain and treat conditions like arthritis.
- 5. Antidiarrheal:** The plant is used to treat diarrhoea.
- 6. Detoxification:** It is believed to help in detoxifying the body.
- 7. Haemorrhoids:** *Mimosa pudica* is used in the treatment of haemorrhoids.
- 8. Anticonvulsant:** It is used in traditional medicine to treat epilepsy and convulsions.
- 9. Skin Conditions:** The plant is applied to the skin to treat eczema and other skin disorders.
- 10. Aphrodisiac:** Some cultures use *Mimosa pudica* as an aphrodisiac.