



Traditional methods of healing practiced by Warli tribes in Thane district of Maharashtra state

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Abstract

Thane is one of the major and tribal district of Maharashtra. This district has predominance of Warli, Thakur, Dhorkoli, Mahadevkoli, Dhodia and Dubla. In Jawhar and Mokhada Talukas of Thane district among these different races of tribes Warali is the major ethnic group. These tribes live in places where there is no facility of Hospitals and medicines except the Taluka places. These people have their own traditional knowledge of curing common diseases. Efforts were made to investigate the traditional methods of healing common ailments. Present study reveals that these people are using plants from their local area, which are easily available for them. They also use the combination of plants in treating particular ailment. Local name of the plant used are recorded and identified and photograph and herbaria prepared for record. Plant part used method of preparation; administration modes and doses are presented. Impact of urbanization on traditional knowledge is discussed. Methods of use as well as conservation of such medicinal plants are suggested.

Key-Words: Common ailments, Conservation, Healing, Traditional knowledge, Medicinal plants

Introduction

The man is using plants in various ways since his existence on the earth. They use it in many ways including as food, housing, medicine including worshipping God for the protection and betterment of human life.¹⁻³

The use of plants as medicine antedates history. All most all civilization and culture has employed plant in the treatment of human sickness. The India system of Aurveda is probably 5000 years old. "Charak Samhita" is the oldest literature having a wide resources of hundreds of herbs in the complete treatment of various diseases including bacterial diseases.⁴ "Indian Materia Medica" deals with the detail identification, collection and therapeutic uses of thousands of medicinal plants.⁵ From a historical perspective, botany as a science had its origin in the use of herbs as medicine. In India there are four well recognized system of traditional medicine namely Aurveda, Unani, Sidha & yoga and Naturopathy This system of medicine cater to the needs of nearly 70% our population residing in villages.⁶

India has 16 agro climatic zones and is immensely rich in medicinal plants occurring in diverse ecosystem. World Health Organization (WHO) has listed over 21000 plant species used around the world for medicinal purpose (National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (NGPGR) booklet, 1996). It has been estimated that India has 47000 species of plant and is ranked number 8th in the world biodiversity. Out of these, medicinal plant comprise of 8000 species. Indian system of medicine (ISM) use around 2500 plant species belonging to more than 1000 genera. About 800 species are used by industry of which approximately 25 % are cultivated and remaining is wild. Thane is one of the tribal district in Maharashtra. This district has predominance of Warali tribes. Other tribes are, Thakur, Dhodia, Dhorkoli and Dubla. These tribes live in places where there is no facility of Medical. The tribal people of this area poor, illiterate and mostly depends on forest wealth to meet their basic medical care. Warali people use different plant species for all ailments and have enormous knowledge about their medicinal usage.

In present study an attempt has been made to collect and document the herbal medicines used by Warali tribes of Thane district for common ailment. This

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include treatment of 36 ailments using 62 plant species.

Material and Methods

For the purpose of collection and documentation of ethno medicinal plants of Tribal area of Thane district (Taluka- Vikramgad, Jawhar and Mokhada) several trips were conducted during August 2006 to October 2008. The method of collection of voucher specimens, their preservation in Herbarium and technique for the collection of ethnomedicinal information was followed as recommended⁷⁻⁸. During field trips information's were collected on the basis of personal interviews with traditional healers, Vaidya, Bhagats Village heads, knowledgeable persons and old persons of society. The collected plant specimens were identified with the help of taxonomic literature of floras⁹⁻¹¹. All the plant specimens are deposited in the Herbarium maintained in the Botany Department of Viva College Virar (W) Dist. Thane.

Results and Conclusion

Warli tribals use plants to cure any sort of physical or physiological disorder. They believe that plants are potent drugs with curative properties for every kind of ailments.

Information collected during the study like names of ailment, plant used for cure, its Botanical name, common name, family, Method of preparation of Medicine and method of administration of medicine is arranged in tabular form (Table-1). According to Mc Intyre¹² eighty percent of all contemporary pharmaceuticals in Europe are derived directly or indirectly from plant sources. (As per figures from Smithkline Beecham.).

Although synthetic drugs brought about revolution in treating different diseases which were thought to be fatal in past centuries. But the synthetic drug are out of rich to majority of world population. Tribal and rural people living in remote areas, dense forest, hills, distant villages are deprived of such medicine. To fight with many common ailments they have their own traditional knowledge which had been inherited generation to generation. These people depend on traditional healers whom they know and trust.

Their traditional knowledge system include not only common ailments but also several "Difficult to cure" ailments such as skin diseases, asthma, piles, epilepsy, paralysis etc. In the present study information are collected about 36 ailments. In treatment of these diseases 62 plant species are used. It is observed that most of the plants are use in their religious ceremonies also. Hence these species of plant are well known to their society. Preparation of medicine is also easy.

Generally the fresh plant parts are used in these methods. All these plants occur in the local area so easily available. They do not prepare and store the medicine commercially but prepare the medicine as and when required. This is helpful in conservation of local plants. They collect Very small quantity of plant parts as and when required.

In present study reveals that some plant like *Ficus bengalensis*, *Ricinus communis*, *Achyranthus aspera*, *Butea monosperma* and *Moringa oleifera* are used repeatedly in treatment of different diseases. It is also observed that for the treatment of one ailment different plant species are used. On the contrary single plant species is being used in the treatment of different diseases.

In tribal areas the indigenous traditional knowledge of medicine is still in practice. However, it is alarming that the indigenous knowledge and practices are gradually disappearing day by day because of fast urbanization. Hence it is necessary to document the indigenous knowledge of useful plants and their therapeutic uses before they are lost forever from the community.

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Table 1: Traditional Medicinal uses of plants by Warli tribes of Thane District (M.S.)

S/ No.	Ailments	Treat No.	Botanical Name, CommonName, voucher No.& Family	Preparation of Medicine	Administration of medicine
1.	Abdominal pain	1	<i>Terminalia arjuna</i> W. & A. Arjun sadado/CLM -112 Combretaceae	Grind bark in water and then filter to get clear extract.	1 cup of extract orally every day for 2-3 days.
		2	<i>Helicteres isora</i> Linn. Murud sheng/CLM-58 Sterculaceae	2-3 pods grind and make volume 1 cup.	2 table spoon 3-5 times in a day till relief.
2.	Appetiser	1	<i>Melothria heterophylla</i> Lour. Gometi/CLM-51 Cucurbitaceae	Ripen fruits or roots.	Fruit or roots are eaten appetizer.
3.	Asthma	1	<i>Achyranthus aspera</i> Linn. Aghada/CLM-80 Amaranthaceae	About 10gm roots grind in water.	1 cup of root extract should be taken orally every day for 15 day.
		2	<i>Bahunia variegata</i> Linn. Apta/CLM-60 Caesalpinaceae	Bark is crushed into powder	1 spoon powder taken with milk or water ever day in the morning till relief.
		3	<i>Holarrhena antidysenterica</i> (Linn.)Wall.ex D.C. Kudai/CLM-59 Apocynaceae	Stem Bark is crushed into powder	1 spoon powder taken with water every day in the morning till relief.
4.	Burns and wounds	2	<i>Cassia tora</i> Linn. Tarota/CLM-81 Caesalpinaceae & <i>Calycopteris floribunda</i> (Roxb.)Lam. Ukshi/CLM-115 Combretaceae	Leaves of these plants burn to ash .Mix ash with coconut oil to make thin paste.	Apply the pest on the affected part of the body.
		3	<i>Sterculia urens</i> Roxb. Kandol/CLM-82 Sterculiaceae	Bark made into thick paste.	Apply on the wound and kept open.
5.	Conjunctivitis	1	<i>Spondias mangifera</i> Willd. Ambada/CLM-51 Anacardiaceae	Latex from stem is used.	Apply or put 2 drops in the eyes.
		2	<i>Allium cepa</i> Linn. Kanda/CLM-52 Liliaceae	Juice of bulb.	2-3 drops, 2-3 times a day.

6.	Cough	1	<i>Solanum xanthocarpum</i> Schrđ.&Wendle. Bhui ringani/CLM-62 Solanaceae & <i>Piper betle</i> Linn. Pan/CLM-53 Piperaceae	1-2 flowers with betel leaf.	1-2 flowers of Bhui ringani should be taken with betal leaf and chewed & juice is swallowed.
		2	<i>Achiranthus aspera</i> Linn. Aghada/CLM-80 Acanthaceae & <i>Piper nigrum</i> Linn. Miri/CLM-54 Piperaceae	Root powder of Achyranthus with peper powder (1:1) mix with honey.	One Table spoon of paste should be taken 2-3 times a day.
		3	<i>Butea monosperma</i> (Lam)Taub. Palas/CLM-110 Papillionaceae	Petiole of leaf.	Chew the petiole of leaf & keep in mouth& keep swallowing the juice
		4	<i>Bambusa aurundanacea</i> Retz. Bamboo/CLM-79 Poaceae	Thick roots of bamboo grind and add equal part of honey.	Take a table spoon of paste dissolve in a cup of water and take orally.
7.	Dhobis ache	1	<i>Mucana pruriens</i> Linn. Khajkohli/CLM-83 Papilionaceae	Crush leaves to get juice or grind stem to make the paste.	Apply on affected region.
		2	<i>Eclipta alba</i> (Linn.) Hassk. Maka/CLM-84 Asteraceae	Crush leaves to get juice.	Apply on affected region.
		3	<i>Anacardium occidentale</i> Linn. Kaju/CLM-56 Anacardiaceae	Latex of seed.	Apply on affected region.
8.	Diarrhea	1	<i>Ficus glomerata</i> Roxb Umber/CLM-64 Moraceae	Latex & curd	4-5 drops of Latex should be taken with curd and rice water.
		2	<i>Ricinus communis</i> Linn. Erاند/CLM-85 Euphorbiacea	Leaf latex (2-3drops) mix with milk.	Children are administer with 1 table spoon of mixture 3 times a day
9.	Dysentery	1	<i>Butea monosperma</i> (Lam.) Taub Palas/CLM-110 Papillionaceae	10-15 gms of gum mix with equal amount of Jaggary or sugar	Take this mixture thrice a day.
		2	<i>Holarrhena antidyseneterica</i> (Linn.) Wall.ex D C. Kudai/CLM-59 Apocynaceae	1) 4-5 leaves crush in Water.	Two table spoon of extract given thrice a day
				2)Stem Bark extraction with Honey	Two table spoon of Extract given thrice a day

				3) Root bark extraction with Honey.	Two table spoon of extract given thrice a day
10.	Eczema	1	<i>Daucus carota</i> Linn. Gajar/CLM-87 Cruciferae	Carrot is crushed & add small quantity of salt & heat on pan without adding water.	Apply hot paste on the affected parts. 7-14 days, every day fresh paste.
		2	<i>Ficus bengalensis</i> Linn. Vad/CLM-65 Moraceae	Old leaves are burnt to ash. Add oil to prepare paste.	Apply on the affected parts regularly till recovery.
11.	Epilepsy	1	<i>Crotalaria retusa</i> Linn. Khudkhuda/CLM-88 Papilionaceae	Fruit extraction (crush and boil in water and filter).	One cup every day for one month on alternate days.
		2	<i>Boerhaavia diffusa</i> Linn. Punarnava/CLM-86 Nyctaginaceae	Two and half leaves crush in woman's milk.	Put one drop in each nostril every day till recovery.
12.	Gas trouble or stomach Inflate	1	<i>Acacia arabica</i> Wild.var. indica Benth. Babhul/CLM-89 Mimosae	Bark dried and make powder.	Take one table spoon of powder with curd.
		2	<i>Moringa oleifera</i> Lam. Shewaga/CLM-78 Moringaceae	Bark of Moringa crush with betel leaf to get juice.	2-3 table spoon of juice 2 times a day.
13.	Hiccup	1	<i>Curcuma longa</i> Linn. Halad/CLM-116 Zinziberaceae & <i>Phaseolus radiatus</i> Linn. Udad/CLM-117 Papilionaceae	Rhizome of turmeric and seeds of Udad are burn on coal to produce smoke.	Smoke dragged through mouth and nostrils.
		2	<i>Musa superba</i> Roxb. Ran keli/CLM-99 Musaceae	Leaf of Ran keli is burnt to ash. Mix with equal part of honey.	Take about 1 gm three times a day.
14.	Hook worm	1	<i>Calotropis gigantea</i> (Linn.)R.Br. Rui/CLM-118 Asclepidaceae	Flower with Pan (Betel leaf) is heated.	Take one flower with pan Hot leaf is tie on the affected part.
		2	<i>Ficus begalansis</i> Linn. Vad/CLM-65	Arial root tips crush into paste.	Apply paste on the affected area.
15.	Hydrocoel	1	<i>Tamarindus indica</i> Linn. Chinch/CLM-98 Caesalpinaceae	Leaves are boiled in Cow's urine, Repeat it 2-3 times, when become dry add more urine & then spread on the cloth .	Tie the pest on the testis every day. Continue treatment For 7 days or 15 days.
		2	<i>Ficus bengalansis</i> Linn. (Vad)/CLM-65 <i>Ficus religiosa</i> L.(Pimpal) /CLM-66 <i>Ficus glomerata</i> Roxb.(Umber) <i>Ficus rumphii</i> Bl.Bijdr.	Bark of four plants in equal quantity crush in oil or Ghee and paste is prepared.	Paste is applied on the testis.

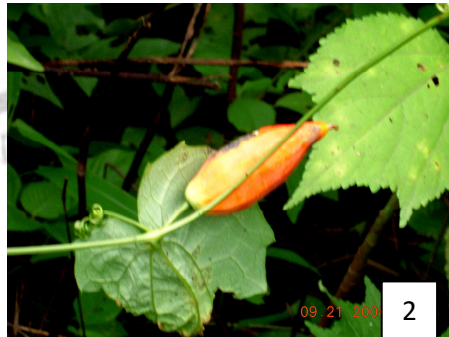
			Payari/CLM-67 Moraceae		
16.	Impotency	1	<i>Solanum indicum</i> sensu. auctt. Non Linn. Ran vangi /CLM-96 Solanaceae & <i>Ricinus communis</i> Linn. Erand/CLM-85 Euphorbiaceae	Seeds of Solanum grind into powder and mix with honey.	Apply pest on the penis then cover and tie with castor leaf. Repeat for 7 days.
		2	<i>Echinops echinatus</i> Roxb. Utkatyar/CLM-111 Compositae	All parts of herb are crush into water and filter to get extract.	Take one cup extract daily for 15 days
		3	<i>Butea monosperma</i> (Lam.) Taub. Palas/CLM-110 Papilionaceae <i>Piper betle</i> Linn. Pan/CLM-53 Piperaceae	Gum of Butea and Betel leaf.	In Betal leaf (Pan) add gum of Butea and chew to swallow the juice. Repeat for 2-3 day or more.
		4	<i>Hibiscus rosa -sinensis</i> Linn. Jaswandi/CLM-95 Malvaceae	Flower (Petals only)	Eat petals of 4-5 flowers for 8-10 days.
17.	Intestinal worms	1	<i>Punica granatum</i> Linn. Dalimb/CLM-101 Lythraceae & <i>Guizotia abyssinica</i> Linn. Khurasani/CLM-119 Asteraceae	Fresh Bark of Punica is crushed along with Khurasani seeds and mixed with equal quantity of honey.	2 table spoons for every day administered orally for 3 days.
		2	<i>Andrographis paniculata</i> (Burm.f.)Wallich ex Nees Kadu Kirait/CLM-100 Acanthaceae	Whole plant is boiled to get extract.	One cup of extract for children & one glass of extract for adult given orally for two days in empty stomach.
18.	Jaundice	1	<i>Ricinus communis</i> Linn. Erand /CLM-85 Euphorbiaceae	Leaves are crush into juice, filter the juice.	Half cup of juice taken in morning and evening for 4-5 days.
		2	<i>Musa paradisiaca</i> Linn. Keli/CLM-102 Musaceae	Ripen banana fruit is filled with mustered powder in the morning.	Banana filled with mustard in morning should be eaten in the evening for 3 days.
		3	<i>Ficus religiosa</i> Linn. Pimpal/CLM-66 Moraceae	Bark is boiled to get extract.	Half cup of extract every day.

19.	Kidney stone	1	<i>Celocia argentea</i> Linn. Kurdu/CLM-94 Amaranthaceae	Roots or seeds grind to get extract.	2 times 2 table spoon per day.
		2	<i>Tectona grandis</i> Linn. Sag/CLM-120 Verbenaceae	Seeds grind to get extract.	Take 2 table spoon of extract every day for 8-10 days.
20.	Lactation	1	<i>Thespesia populnea</i> (L.) Sol.ex Correa Paras pimpal/CLM-73 Malvaceae	2-3 gms of Gum or latex with 1 glass of rice flour drink	Take in morning in place of tea.
		2	<i>Asparagus racemosus</i> Willd. Shatavari/CLM-103 Asparagaceae	Cladodes used to make vegetable.	Should be given to lactating females.
		3	<i>Memecylon edule</i> Roxb. Anjan/CLM-113 Melastomataceae	Leaf extract.	2 table spoon per day.
21.	Leprosy	1	<i>Anogeissus latifolia</i> Wall.ex Guill & Perr. Dhavda/CLM-121 Combretaceae	Seeds burn to ash & mix with oil	Apply on lesions
22.	Leucorrhoea	1	<i>Cajanus cajan</i> (L.) Millsp. Tur/CLM-72 Papillionaceae	Leaf crush to make juice.	1 cup daily for I week.
		2	<i>Hibiscus sabdariffa</i> L. Lal ambadi/CLM-92 Malvaceae	Root extract.	2 table spoon per day.
		3	<i>Garugo pinnata</i> Roxb. Kakad/CLM-70 Bursereaceae	Bark decoction	Half cup for alternate days for a week.
		4	<i>Butea superba</i> Roxb. Tivas/CLM-91 Papillionaceae	Bark decoction	Half cup for alternate days for a week.
		5	<i>Ricinus communis</i> Linn. Erand /CLM-85 Euphorbiaceae	Root extract	2 table spoon per day for 4-5 days
23.	Lice	1	<i>Randia tomentosa</i> W.A. Gelphal/CLM-69 Rubiaceae	Juice of Gelphal.	Apply on head to kill lice.
		2	<i>Annona sqamosa</i> Linn. Sitaphal/CLM-122 Annonaceae	Seeds are crushed to make paste.	Apply on head to kill lice.
24.	Mouth and tongue ulcers	1	<i>Zizypus rugosa</i> Lam. Toran/CLM-114 Rhamnaceae	Extract juice of leaves in water	Gargle with leaf extract for many times a day.
25.	Migraine	1	<i>Solanum xanthocarpum</i> Schrd.&Wendl. Bhui ringani/CLM-62 Solanaceae	Juice is obtained by crushing the leaves. Filter to get clear liquid.	Put two three drops in nostrils.

		2	<i>Adenthera pavonina</i> Linn. Pandhari gung/CLM-75 Mimosae	Root grinded in water & filter to get clear liquid	Put 5-7 drops in nostril.
		3	<i>Calotropis gigantea</i> (Linn.)R.Br. Rui/CLM-76 Asclepiadaceae	Dry the roots and made into powder.	Smoke of root powder drag into nostrils.
26.	Mums	1	<i>Ficus glomerata</i> Roxb Umber/CLM-64 Moraceae	Latex is mixed with vermilion to make paste.	Apply to the swelling of the mums.
		2	<i>Ricinus communis</i> Linn. Erand /CLM-85 Euphorbiaceae	Leaf latex (2-3drops) mix with milk.	Children are administer with 1 table spoon of mixture 3 times a day
27.	Nail bed abscess	1	<i>Datura metal</i> Linn. Dhotra/CLM-108 Solanaceae	Seeds of Datura are crushed into paste or powder.	Apply on the infected part and tie with Datura leaf.
		2	<i>Azadirachta indica</i> A.Juss. Kadu limb/CLM-63 Meliaceae	Leaves are crushed with salt to make paste, heat with oil or ghee.	Apply hot paste on the affected area.
28.	Nerve Tonic	1	<i>Ficus bengalensis</i> L. Vad/CLM-65 <i>Ficus religiosa</i> L.(Pimpal)/CLM-66 <i>Ficus glomerata</i> Roxb. (Umber)/CLM-64 Moraceae	Fruits of trios with ghee.	One fruit of each with 2 table spoon of ghee should be eaten in the morning for 7 days.
29.	Paralysis	1	<i>Datura metal</i> Linn. Dhotra/CLM-108 Solanaceae	Oil obtained from seed of Datura	Massage of the oil on affected parts of the body for few days.
30.	Piles	1	<i>Helicteres isora</i> Linn. Murud sheng/CLM-58 Sterculaceae	Burn the pod into ash & mix with oil	Apply to the fistula.
		2	<i>Jatropa curcas</i> Linn. Ratanjyot/CLM-104 Euphorbiaceae	Latex is collected and mix with Jatropa oil	Clean the anal opening with the mixture and keep a cotton swab soaked in latex & oil in the anus.
		3	<i>Carica papaya</i> Linn. Papaya/CLM-97 Caricaceae	Latex of unripe fruit of papaya is collected.	Clean the anus and apply latex 2 times a day.
		4	<i>Mimosa pudica</i> Linn. Lajalu/CLM-93 Mimosae	Leaves crush into paste or burn to make ash then mix with oil	Apply on fistula 2-3 times a day.
		5	<i>Raphanus sativus</i> Linn. Mula/CLM-123 Cruciferae	One fresh medium size radish with table salt.	One fresh medium size radish with table salt should be taken empty stomach in the morning for 1 month.

		6	<i>Celocia argentea</i> Linn. Kurdu/CLM-94 Amaranthaceae	Juice of leaf, root and stem 10gm mix with 10 ml of milk.	Take mixture orally in the morning every day for one month.
31.	Prickle heat	1	<i>Mangifera indica</i> Linn. Amba/CLM-105 Anacardiaceae	Seeds are grinded to make paste.	Apply paste on the skin after bath.
		2	<i>Eugenia jambulana</i> Lam. Jamun/CLM-90 Myrtaceae	Seeds are grinded to make paste.	Apply paste on the skin after bath.
		3	<i>Ficus religiosa</i> Linn. Pimpal/CLM-66 Moraceae	Bark of ficus grind with camphor and make a paste .	Apply thick paste on the affected parts of the body.
32.	Scorpion bite	1	<i>Achiranthus aspera</i> Linn. Aghada/CLM-80 Amaranthaceae	Crush leaves to form poultice.	Apply poultice at and around the place of bite.
		2	<i>Nerium oleander</i> Linn. Pandhari kanher /CLM-57 Apocynaceae	Root grinded on stone to make thick paste	Apply paste at the place of bite as well give little amount with water orally. After vomiting gives relief.
		3	<i>Butea monosperma</i> (Lam) Taub. Palas/CLM-110 Papillionaceae	Root grinded on stone to make thick paste	Apply paste at the place of bite as well give little amount with water orally. After vomiting gives relief.
33.	Tooth ache	1	<i>Barleria prionitis</i> Linn. Koranti/CLM-106 Acanthaceae	4-5 leaves.	Take 4-5 leaves, crush and keep between the paining teeth and allow salivation. (Can be kept over night for relief.
		2	<i>Jatropha curcas</i> Linn. Ratanjyot/CLM-104 Euphorbiaceae	Either latex or Bark powder or twig is used.	Massage the teeth with latex or bark powder or use tender twig as tooth brush
34.	Tumor	1	<i>Mesua ferrea</i> Linn. Nag champa/CLM-107 Clusiaceae	Roots grinded on stone to get paste.	Apply paste on the hard tumor. It makes tumor soft and finally clear the pus.
35.	Uteral prolapse	1	<i>Gloriosa superba</i> Linn. Kalalavi/CLM-109 Liliaceae	Bulb is burn to ash.	Push the uterus inward with the hands applied with ash.
36.	Vomiting	1	<i>Moringa oleifera</i> Lam. Shewaga/CLM-78 Moringaceae	Crush the roots of Moringa with Jira and mix with honey.	Take one table spoon thick syrup thrice a day.

Plate 1: Some herbs from region



Legends: Fig 01 *Guizotia abyssinica*, Fig 02 *Melothria heterophylla*, Fig 03 *Calycopteris floribunda*
 Fig 04 *Sterculia urens*, Fig 05 Tribal man collecting bark, Fig 06 *Holarrhena antidysenterica*, Fig 07 *Andrographis paniculata*, Fig 08 *Datura metal*, Fig 09 *Helicteres isora*, Fig 10 *Celocia argentea*, Fig 11 *Zizypus rugosa*, Fig 12 *Achiranthus aspera*