

Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*): A Single Drug and Multipurpose Formulation Medicine in
Ayurveda with Different Effects through Different Anupana

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Abstract

Tinospora cordifolia (Guduchi, Giloy) is a cornerstone herb in Ayurveda, renowned as Amrita (nectar) and a Rasayana (rejuvenator) for its broad therapeutic spectrum. Classical texts describe Guduchi as having bitter-astringent taste, hot potency, sweet post-digestive effect, and unctuous quality, enabling it to pacify all three doshas. It is indicated in numerous conditions such as fever (Jvara), diabetes (Prameha), jaundice (Kamala), skin and joint disorders, anemia, cough/asthma and more. In practice, Guduchi is prepared in various forms (juice, decoction, cold infusion, extract tablets, etc.) and taken with different anupānas (carriers) – for example honey, ghee, milk, or warm water – to modify and enhance its effects. This review examines classical Ayurvedic sources and modern scientific literature on Guduchi, highlighting how different preparation methods and vehicles influence its pharmacology. We summarize classical ślokas (verses) on Guduchi with transliteration, translation, and interpretation. Modern clinical and pharmacological studies (PubMed, ScienceDirect) are surveyed to document Guduchi's antipyretic, anti-inflammatory, antidiabetic, hepatoprotective and immunomodulatory actions. A comparative table of Guduchi formulations, anupānas, and indications is provided. The discussion emphasizes the integration of Ayurvedic wisdom with evidence-based medicine, illustrating how classical uses of Guduchi are substantiated by contemporary research.

Keywords: Guduchi, Rasayana; Anupāna; Ayurvedic formulation; Antipyretic; Anti-inflammatory; Antidiabetic; Hepatoprotective; Immunomodulatory; Integrative medicine.

Introduction

Tinospora cordifolia (Guduchi, Giloy) is a large, glabrous climbing shrub in the Menispermaceae family, widespread in the Indian subcontinent. Its Sanskrit name “Guduchi” signifies “that which protects the entire body,” and it is also called Amrita (the nectar of immortality) and Madhuparni, reflecting its legendary status as a rejuvenative (rasayana) herb. As an Ayurvedic Rasayana, Guduchi is valued for promoting longevity, strength, and resistance to disease. It is included among the medhya rasayana (medhya = intellect-promoting) formulations in classical texts, often administered as fresh juice with its root and flower.

Classical Ayurvedic compendia (Charaka, Sushruta, Bhavaprakasha, Sharangadhara, etc.) list Guduchi among prime rejuvenators. Charaka Samhita (Sutra Sthana 25/12) extols its digestive and absorptive actions, noting it “relieves Vāta and Kapha, constipation and bleeding disorders”. Guduchi is categorized as Rasāyana (rejuvenative) and Sangrahini (astringent tonic), implying nourishing and immune-strengthening effects. The classic listing of Guduchi’s rasa- (taste), vīrya- (potency), and vipāka- (post-digestive) properties is: Tikta (bitter) and Kaṣhāya (astringent) rasa; Uṣṇa (hot) vīrya; and Madhura (sweet) vipāka. It also has Laghu (light) and Snigdha (unctuous) guṇas, enabling it to balance all three doṣhas. Thus “Guduchi pacifies Vata, Pitta and Kapha”, which is consistent with its wide indication range.

According to Charaka and Sushruta, Guduchi’s uses are extraordinarily broad: it is recommended for Tridoṣa-pāka (balancing all doshas), jvara (fever), kasa-svāsa (cough–asthma), pandu (anemia), kamala (jaundice), vāta-rakta (gout/arthritis), prameha (diabetes), krimi (worms), hṛdroga (heart disorders), and many other disorders. For example, Charaka lists Guduchi in formulations for chronic fevers (jvarahara) and diabetes (prameha-khādyāni). In Chikitsā Sthāna, Guduchi is cited as part of Shatyādi Gana for cough–asthma, and used in various formulations for fever (jvara). Its epithet Amrita (immortality) underscores the Ayurvedic belief in its rejuvenating and protective powers.

Modern scientific reviews confirm that many classical claims are finding validation. Upadhyay et al. note that Guduchi has documented effects as rasāyana, sangrahi, balya (strength-promoting), agnivardhaka (digestive), tridoshahara (dosha-balancing), dāhnaśāka (burning alleviating), kāsasvāsahara (cough–asthma-relieving), pānduśāka (anemia-ameliorating), kāmala-kuṣṭha-vātāntaka (jaundice/skin/gout-relieving), jvarahara (antipyretic), krimihara (antiparasitic), pramehahara (antidiabetic), ārśa-kriccha (piles/urinary disorder alleviating), hṛdroganāśāka (heart disorder-relieving), etc.. This ancient pharmacopeial knowledge has motivated a “reverse pharmacology” approach, leading to identification of active compounds and clinical studies on Guduchi’s effects. Contemporary research has found Guduchi extracts to have antidiabetic, anti-inflammatory, hepatoprotective, immunomodulatory, antioxidant and other activities. In particular, Guduchi is celebrated in Ayurveda for immune modulation: it is commonly called Rasayana for immunity, and is extensively used “for its potential in improving the immune system and the body’s resistance against infections”.

Given its multi-system effects, Guduchi is administered in multiple dosage forms (fresh juice, decoction, cold infusion, tablets, etc.) and always with appropriate anupānas (vehicles), such as honey, ghee, milk or water. Different anupānas can potentiate or modulate Guduchi’s actions – for example, honey is considered yoṣavāhi (catalytic) and accentuates its immunomodulatory effect, while ghee enhances its nourishing and Vata-pacifying properties. This review addresses how Guduchi’s various preparations and anupānas lead to different therapeutic outcomes. We include classical śloka with transliteration and translation to illustrate Ayurvedic reasoning, and we survey modern clinical studies (PubMed, ScienceDirect) documenting key pharmacological actions. A comparative table of Guduchi formulations, anupānas, and target indications is provided. Emphasis is placed on bridging Ayurvedic

concepts with evidence-based pharmacology, highlighting how Guduchi serves as a model of integrative herbal therapy.

Ayurvedic Pharmacology (Rasa Panchaka)

In Ayurveda, Guduchi is celebrated as a supreme Rasayana. Classical texts describe its properties as follows: “मधुराम्लकटुतिक्तानां रसाणां विरेयमधुरम्। विसृष्टिं च पुरुषो भूयो जीवितं आयुः-मार्थकः॥”

Transliteration: “Madhurām̐la-kaṭu-tiktānām rasāṇām vīryam madhuram | Viśṛṣṭim ca puruṣobhyam āyuh-kramam jīvitamārthakam ||”

Translation: “Of all tastes, that which has sweet post-digestive effect is considered potent; it enhances appetite and nourishes the body, thereby increasing lifespan.”

Interpretation: This Rasāyana verse implies that Guduchi’s sweet vipaka (post-digestive sweetness) and nourishing action (jīvitamārthakam) underlie its rejuvenating effect, supporting longevity.

Rasa Panchaka

- Rasa (Taste): Tikta (bitter), Kashaya (astringent)
- Guna (Qualities): Laghu (light), Snigdha (unctuous)
- Virya (Potency): Ushna (hot)
- Vipaka (Post-digestive effect): Madhura (sweet)
- Prabhava (Specific effect): Rasayana (rejuvenator)
- Dosha effect: Tridosahara (balances Vata, Pitta, and Kapha)

This profile explains Guduchi’s ability to detoxify (Ama-nashaka), kindle digestion (Agni-deepana), pacify doshas, and nourish tissues (Dhatu-poshaka).

Classical References and Shlokas

Charaka Samhita (Sutra Sthana 25/12):

“गुडूची त्रिदोषघ्नी दीपनी संग्राहिणी॥”

Translation: Guduchi pacifies all three doshas, stimulates digestion, and strengthens gastrointestinal function.

Bhavaprakasha Nighantu:

“वयस्थापनं च गुणे दुर्लभत्वात्॥”

Translation: Guduchi promotes longevity (Vayasthapana) due to its unique Rasayana attributes.

Charaka Samhita (Sutra Sthana):

“राजव्या रसाहरी वीर्येराग्री संवर्धिनी॥”

Translation: Guduchi improves vitality (Veerya), enhances nutrition, and strengthens digestive fire (Agni).

General Rasayana Verse:

“मधुराम्लकटुतिक्तानां रसाणां वीर्यं मधुरम्। विसृष्टिं च पुरुषो भूयो जीवितं आयुः-मार्थकः॥”

Translation: Substances with sweet post-digestive effect nourish the body, promote longevity, and support vitality.

Therapeutic Indications in Ayurveda

Guduchi is widely prescribed for:

- Jvara (Fever)
- Prameha (Diabetes)
- Kamala (Jaundice)
- Kasa-Swasa (Cough, Asthma)
- Vatarakta (Arthritis, Gout)
- Pandu (Anemia)
- Krimi (Parasitic infections)

- Ojo-varadhana (Immunity enhancement)

Preparations and Anupana (Co-administration Vehicles)

Ayurveda employs Guduchi in diverse formulations. Classical administration forms include: Swarasa (fresh stem juice), Kashāya/Kvātha (decoction of stem), Śarāvi (cold infusion), Ghana Vāti (concentrated extract tablets), Arishta/Asava (fermented tonics), and Satva (aqueous extract powder). For example, Guducyādi Kasāya (decoction) is frequently prescribed for fever and chronic disorders, while Guduchi Satva (an extract obtained by triturating juice) is noted for managing fever and debility. Charaka and Sharangadhara describe recipes for Guduchi Ghana (solid extracts) and Arista preparations, although Sharangadhara mentions only a few Guduchi formulas (Shar. Chi., Madhyama Khaṇḍa).

Crucially, each preparation is taken with an appropriate anupāna (co-vehicle or adjuvant). Anupānas in Ayurveda are believed to direct the action of the drug and enhance its effect. Common anupānas for Guduchi include honey, ghee, milk, and warm water. These vehicles can markedly influence Guduchi's properties. For instance, honey is yogavāhi (catalytic) and enhances the herbal action, often used to boost immunity and mental effects. Ghee adds nourishing, Vata-pacifying potential, useful in joint disorders. Milk is a cooling, nourishing medium that reinforces Rasayana qualities. Warm water or decoction carriers are used in general tonic preparations. Each combination is chosen based on the patient's constitution and the therapeutic goal.

Classical and practical guidance illustrate these choices. One Ayurvedic remedy book notes that Guduchi powder or decoction taken with ghee is particularly useful in Vata imbalance disorders such as arthritis. In contrast, Guduchi with jaggery (unrefined sugar) helps relieve constipation, leveraging the lubricating sweet substance to counteract the dry quality of an astringent herb. For Pitta-related imbalances, Guduchi with sugar candy is recommended to cool and pacify gastric burning and skin disorders. In cases of gout (Vatarakta), combination with castor oil is advised, likely to lubricate joints while Guduchi balances dosha. Even simple remedies pair Guduchi with spices: e.g., Guduchi powder with ginger for rheumatoid arthritis, combining anti-inflammatory effects of ginger with the Rasayana herb. For Pitta-type vomiting with intense heat, a poultice of Guduchi root with channa and Sphaṭika is cited. Notably, these examples show that the anupāna is often an edible substance or simple additive that harmonizes the formulation.

Formulation	Anupana (Co-vehicle)	Target Indications
Kashaya (Decoction)	Ghee	Vata disorders (arthritis, gout); general strengthening
Powder/Kvatha + Jaggery	Jaggery	Constipation, digestive weakness
Powder + Sugar candy	Sugar candy	Pitta disorders (skin diseases, gastritis, dizziness)
Powder + Castor oil	Castor oil	Gout, joint pain (Vatarakta)
Powder + Ginger	Dry ginger (Shunthi)	Rheumatoid arthritis, musculoskeletal inflammation
Satva (Aqueous extract)	Honey + Trikatu paste	Immunity booster, respiratory allergies
Ghana Vati (Extract tablet)	Warm water or honey	Chronic fever, diabetes, metabolic syndrome
Swarasa (Juice)	Milk or warm water	Rasayana (rejuvenation), brain tonic, detoxification

Classical Ayurvedic References with Shlokas

Charaka Samhita (Sutra Sthana 25/40):

"गुडूची तिक्तकषायोष्णा कटु विपाका मेध्यिका।
त्रिदोषशामिनी हिता ज्वरार्तानां विशेषतः॥"

Transliteration: Guduchi is bitter, astringent, hot in potency, pungent post-digestion, intellect-promoting (Medhya), pacifies all doshas, especially beneficial in fever.

Sharangadhara Samhita (Madhyama Khanda 1/7):

> "अमृताया रसः क्षौद्रयुक्तः सर्वप्रमेहजीत्।
हरिद्राचूर्णयुक्तो वा रसो धात्र्याः समाक्षिकः॥"

Meaning: Guduchi juice with honey cures Prameha (diabetes). When mixed with turmeric and amla juice, it effectively balances blood sugar.

Bhavaprakasha Nighantu (Guduchyadi Varga):

> "गुडूची कटुका तिक्ता रसना कषाया शिता।
त्रिदोषघ्नी विशेषेण मेध्या च रसयानिका॥"

Charaka Samhita (Jwara Chikitsa):

"ज्वरानां सर्वरूपेषु गुडूची स्वरसः श्रेष्ठः।"

Chakradatta (Rasayana Adhyaya):

"रसायनानामामृता गुडूची प्रोक्ता विशारदैः।"

Guduchi Swarasa (Sha.Sam.Ma.Kh. Chp 1/7):

"अमृताया रसः क्षौद्रयुक्तः सर्वप्रमेहजीत्।
हरिद्राचूर्णयुक्तो वा रसो धात्र्याः समाक्षिकः॥"
(Giloy juice with honey or turmeric cures Prameha/diabetes.)

Guduchi Hima (B.R. Chardi Rogadhikara):

> "कृतं गुडूच्या विधिवत् कषायं हिम संजीतम्।
त्रिसृश्वपी भावेत्पथ्यं मक्षिकेन समायुतम्॥"
(Properly prepared cold infusion of Giloy with honey alleviates vomiting.)

Guduchi Ghana Vati (Samshamani Vati)

Indications: Fever, chronic weakness, tuberculosis.

Guduchi Satva (Extract Powder)

Indication: Chronic fever, anemia, debility.

Amritarishta (AFI Part I)

Indication: Intermittent fevers, tuberculosis.

Pharmacological Evidence (Modern Validation)

1. Antipyretic and Anti-inflammatory Actions: Guduchi extract reduces fever and inflammation (Liaquat et al., 2015).
2. Antidiabetic Effects: Clinical studies confirm its hypoglycemic and lipid-lowering activity (Ijpsr, 2016).
3. Hepatoprotective Role: Guduchi prevents toxin-induced liver damage and supports detoxification.
4. Immunomodulatory Actions: Phytochemicals enhance macrophage and cytokine responses (Sharma et al., 2012).

Conclusion

Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*) epitomizes the Ayurvedic concept of a single-drug, multi-purpose Rasayana with profound clinical relevance. Its classical shlokas affirm its role in balancing doshas, rejuvenating tissues, and boosting immunity, while modern studies corroborate its antipyretic, antidiabetic, hepatoprotective, and immunomodulatory effects. By integrating ancient knowledge and modern science, Guduchi offers immense potential for holistic and integrative healthcare.

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