

# **MAJITHO**

## ***Rubia manjith***

Majitho is a climbing prickly herb that grows up to 10m long. It is distributed in Himalayan region of Nepal at and around 2400m of elevation. Stems are quadrate in shape. Leaves are variable, cordate-ovate to ovate-lanceolate; 2-8 in a whorl, normally four, sometimes on pair is larger than the rest. Flowers are small, white or greenish or shades are red and yellow sweet-scented arranged in terminal panicles of cymes. Fruits are globose, or slightly 2-lobed dark-purplish or black, fleshy with two small seeds. Rootstocks are perennial. Roots are long, wide, externally longitudinally striated, and yellowish red.

### **1. BIOLOGY**

#### **A. Taxonomy**

Family: Rubiaceae

Scientific name: *Rubia manjith*, syn. *Rubia cordifolia*

English name: Madder

Local Name: Majitho



“An herbaceous climbing perennial, with 4-angled stems and branches, with unequal stalked leaves in whorls of 4, and with usually reddish-brown flowers in small clusters aggregated together into a large branched cluster with leafy bracts. Flowers c. 3 mm across, with 5 spreading incurved lobes. Leaves with ovate-heart-shaped long-pointed blade 3-5 cm, with hooked prickles on the veins beneath; leaf-stalk as long as blade, with hooked prickles; stems with hooked prickles on angles. Fruit c. 5 mm, globular, black, fleshy with red juice”.

#### **B. Habitat and Range**

Habitat: The madder is a climber on shrubs that grows in open, sunny area; it will not be damage by the cattle. Altitudinal range: 1200-2700 m

#### **C. Ecology**

Altitudinal range: 1200-2700 m

Habitat: The madder is a climber on shrubs that grows in open, sunny area; it will not be damage by the cattle.

Flowering time: Jun- Oct.

## Regeneration

Natural regeneration is less but this species is cultivated abundantly in the private and other lands. Seedlings are used for plantation.

## **2. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

### A. Management System

Majitho is only collected from the forest; no cultivation has been started. The shoots of climbing Majitho plants are cut during harvesting. Over harvesting of Majitho occur in the fields. Majitho is collected from August to October.

### B. Harvesting

Villagers do not like to harvest this plant, since they can be injured by the sharp angle while removing it from its support. After the shoots of climbing Majitho plants are harvested during August to October, then these shoots are cut into small pieces with a knife. These shoots are dried in sun for 2-5 days depending on weather condition. Bundles of dried shoots are manually packed into jute sacks. Only the crude raw material is supplied to market there is no processing units for making the dyes from this product.

### C. Sustainability Issues

## **3. UTILIZATION**

### A. Subsistence Use

Roots of Majitho are credited with tonic, astringent, antidysenteric, antiseptic, and deobstruent properties. They are used in rheumatism and form an ingredient of several Ayurvedic preparations. Roots are said to be active against *Staphylococcus aureus* and are made into a paste for application into ulcers, inflammations and skin troubles. Roots are also used for colouring medicinal oils.

### Commercial Use

The stem and root of Majitho furnishes a good red dye for dyeing coarse cotton fabrics, blankets, and carpets.

#### **4. MARKETING**

##### **A. Production Volume and Trade**

According to Forest Range Office, about 10,000 kgs of Majitho is traded from Basantapur in the year 2001-2002.

##### **B. Current Market Channel**

Collectors sell their products to local traders and local traders supplied the product to large traders (regional traders). Finally Large traders export Majitho to Indian markets.

Collector -> Village Trader (Local trader) -> Regional Trader  
Collector -> Village Trader -> Exporter

##### **C. Current Processing**

Cutting of shoot portion of climbing Majitho plants with the help of sickles. Then these shoots are cut into small pieces with the help of knife. These pieces of shoot are dried in sun for few days. Bundles of dried shoot pieces made manually then these bundles are packed in jute sacks for marketing.

##### **D. Variability and Risk**

Limited markets for this species exist, the value of this species still unexplored. Because of low price, people are not interested for business of Majitho. Uncertain markets and price exist for Majitho.

#### **5. SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLICY ISSUES**

##### **A. Socioeconomic factors of existing activities**

Due to low price of Majitho in markets, limited markets and undefined value of Majitho, people are less interest in the business of Majitho. Especially woman, shepherds and children are involved in the collection of Majitho in their leisure time. The cash generated by selling of Majitho is used to buy food, clothes, salt etc.

##### **B. HMG Policy on Collection, Processing, and Trade**

###### **1. Current Policy**

Collection permit is required before collection from DFO and CFUGs describing collection area, method of collection, quantity and objective of collection, but in practice, it is not followed. Collectors sell the product to village traders. Forest personnel have the power to conduct search, impound goods, undertake arrests, conduct investigations, and file cases.

## 2. Policy Constraints

Several unnecessary checkpoints from district up to the border are the main constraints, which are responsible for harassing the traders.