

## Gotu Kola Centella Asiatica Family: Mackinlayaceae

### Description

Gotu Kola is a perennial that spreads thin stolons along the ground from a hairy rhizome and produces a small, shiny, jade-coloured palette-shaped leaf on a 5cm stalk that branches away from nodes, with a serrated edge.

### Growing Tips

It is an aquatic plant that grows best along ditches and the side of ponds, preferring partial shade. It is also prone to disease.

### Parts Used

Leaves and stems

### Uses

In many Asian countries it is used for culinary purposes together with Chilli and Turmeric, and is a favourite in drinks, salads and curries.

Anti-viral, anti-inflammatory and anti-bacterial qualities make this herb useful for wound healing to prevent over scarring, to ease oedema and alleviate psoriasis and shingles. It is used to relieve anxiety, to help sleep and to improve brain capacity. It facilitates healthy blood flow through the hands and feet and may even have an ulcer-preventing effect.

Caution: Avoid Gotu Kola herbal extract if you are pregnant, breast-feeding, on cholesterol-lowering, sedative, diuretic or diabetic medication. Gotu Kola is not suitable for children under 18 years. It should not be taken longer than six weeks at a time.

### Origin & History

Gotu Kola is native to Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Northern Australia and Iran, and is also traditionally used in Ayurvedic, Chinese and African medicine. It was used mainly for its calming and nerve-strengthening qualities, and for wound healing. The Thai used it to detoxify Opium.

For its rejuvenating effects it has been called “the fountain of life”. A testimony of the longevity-granting gifts of this herb is a Chinese Tai Chi master and herbalist, Li Ching Yuen, who died in May 1928 at age 197 and attributed this to the use of a group of herbs including Gotukola, wild reishi, goji berries, as well as the long practice of Qi gong.

