



## *Gloriosa superba* Linn – A medicinally important plant

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*Gloriosa superba* Linn., is one of the endangered species among the medicinal plants (Badola, 2002; Hemaiswarya, 2009) which is a striking tuberous climbing plant with brilliant wavy edged, yellow and red flowers that appears from November to March every year (Rajak and Rai, 1990). It is one of the seven upavishas in the Indian medicine, which cure many ailments but may prove fatal on misuse (Joshi, 1993). The tuberous root stocks of glory lily, *G. superba* boiled with *Sesamum* oil is applied twice a day on the joints, affected with arthritis reduces pain (Singh, 1993). It is also used to treat intestinal worms, bruises, infertility, skin problem and impotence. So the art of use of plants medicine is herbalism. Man has been using this miraculous medicine for thousands of years but in couple of decades the practice of herbalism is seen very rare. Although the modern medicine has developed so much improves to be useful in treating many horrible human diseases, but not in reasonable cost (Acharya and Srivastava, 2008).

Traditional system of medicine is found to have utilities as many accounts. Due to population rise adequate supply of drug and high cost of treatment in side effect along with drug resistance has been encountered in synthetic drugs, which has lead to an elevated emphasis for the use of plants to treat human diseases. India is known for cultivation of medicinal plants, and also India is having rich collection of medicinal and

aromatic plants which could be utilize to prepare drugs (Jain and Suryavanshi, 2010).

### **Origin, botany and distribution:**

*Gloriosa* is a native of tropical Asia and Africa. The genus derives its name from the Latin word gloriosus, referring to the flowers. It is found growing throughout tropical India, from the North -West Himalayas to Assam and the Deccan peninsula, extending up to an elevation of 2120 M. In Karnataka, it is commonly found growing all along the Western Ghats; it is also found growing in Madagascar, Srilanka, Indo-China and on the adjacent island. *Gloriosa superba* also known as Glory lily belongs to the family Liliaceae and is known by various vernacular names. In Hindi it is known as Karihari, Languli; In English, Glory Lily; In Kanada, Gowrihoo, Akkutangiballi; In Sanskrit, Langali, Visalya; In Tamil, Kalappai killanku, Nabhikodi. It is an herbaceous, climbing perennial, growing between 3.5 to 6m in length, but usually trained at 1.5m above ground level.

The vines are tall, weak-stemmed with tuberous roots that support themselves by means of cirrhosed tips. The leaves are ovate, lanceolate, acuminate, the tips spirally twisted to serve as tendrils. The flowers are large, solitary or may form a lax-corymbose inflorescence, twisted and crisped with six recurved or reflexed petals, blossoming yellow but changing to yellow-red and deep scarlet. In the bud stage, the petals hang down over the ovary and on maturity; they assume an erect position, leaving the ovary with its stigma exposed at right angles. There are five, long stamens, each with a long anther that displays profuse orange-yellow pollen. The ovary is 3-celled and it forms an ellipsoidal capsule.

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