

7.1.7. Shatavari (28)

Shatavari is in use since ancient times to support women at the end of menses by stimulating circulation, as well as healthy nervous system and hormonal function.

Synonyms

Satavari, Asparagu, Ekalkanto, and Satmuli.

Biological Source

Shatavari is the dried tuberous roots of *Asparagus racemosus* Wild.

Family

Liliaceae

Occurrence and Distribution

Shatavari (figure 7.7) grows widely throughout the tropical regions of Africa, Australia, Asia, and India. It is also distributed in the Himalayan range up to an altitude of 4000-4500 feet. It grows wild in the dry and deciduous forests of Maharashtra.

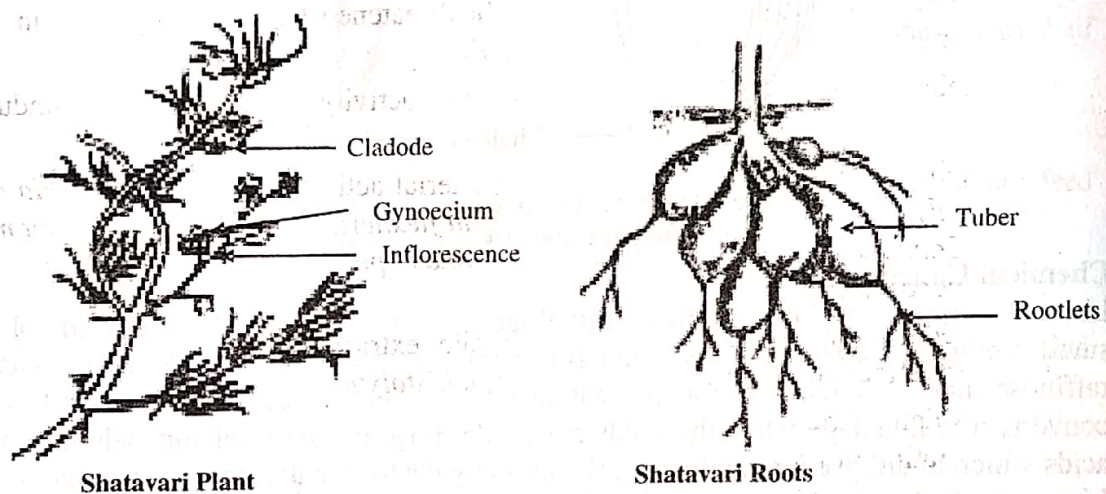


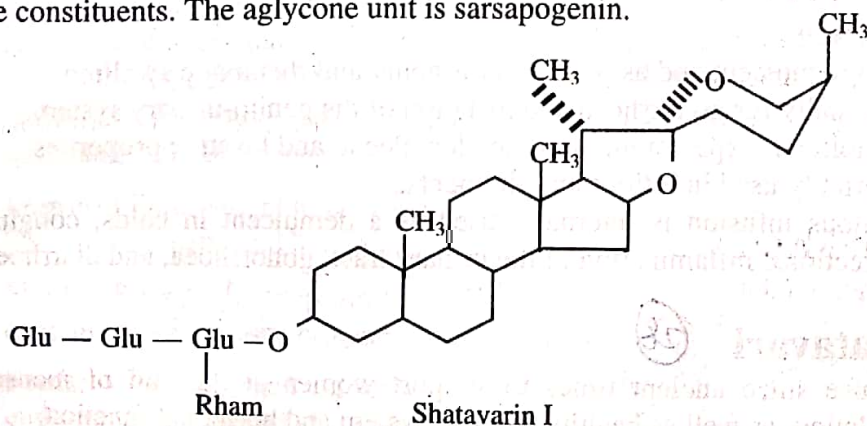
Figure 7.7: Shatavari

Organoleptic Evaluation

- 1) **Roots:** Peeled, dried, cylindrical, fleshy tuberous, straight or slightly curved, tapering towards the base and swollen in the middle; white to buff in colour; 5-10cm long and 1-2cm in diameter; fracture is irregular; upper surface has longitudinal furrows and minute transverse wrinkles; occur in the form of a cluster or fascicle at the base of the stem.
- 2) **Taste:** Bitter.
- 3) **Odour:** Odourless.
- 4) **Leaves:** Linear green and needle like.

Chemical Constituents

Shatavari contains **steroidal saponin glycosides**, i.e., **shatavarin I - IV** (0.1-0.2%) as its active constituents. The aglycone unit is sarsapogenin.



Shatavarin I has three glucose and rhamnose molecules, while shatavarin IV has two glucose and one rhamnose molecules. Shatavari also contains β -sitosterol, their glycosides, sarasapogenin, spirostanolic acid, furastanolic acid, and polycyclic alkaloid asparagine A.

Therapeutic Efficacy

- 1) Its roots are used as a galactagogue to stimulate milk secretion.
- 2) Its roots are used as tonic and diuretic.
- 3) Shatavarin-I shows antioxytotic activity.
- 4) Its roots are used as medicinal oil for controlling nervine disorders and rheumatism.
- 5) In Ayurvedic medicine system, it is used in threatened abortion as well as in safe delivery because of its uterine blocking activity.
- 6) Methanolic extract of roots possesses antitussive activity on sulphur dioxide-induced cough.
- 7) Methanolic extract of roots possesses antibacterial activity against *Escherichia coli*, *Shigella dysenteriae*, *Shigella sonnei*, *Shigella flexneri*, *Vibrio cholerae*, *Salmonella typhi*, *Salmonella typhimurium*, *Pseudomonas pectida*, *Bacillus subtilis*, and *Staphylococcus aureus*.
- 8) An aqueous solution of the crude alcoholic extract of the roots possesses an inhibitory effect on the growth of *Eintamoeba histolytica*.
- 9) The powdered dried root of *A. racemosus* is used in Ayurveda for dysepesia. Oral administration of powdered dried root of *A. racemosus* promotes gastric emptying. In Ayurveda, *A. racemosus* is used for treating ulcerative disorder of stomach. The juice of fresh roots of *A. racemosus* shows a curative effect in patients with duodenal ulcers.
- 10) Chloroform/methanol (1:1) extract of fresh roots of *A. racemosus* reduces the occurrence of tumour.
- 11) It has a significant antidepressant activity.
- 12) It is effective in reducing inflammatory damage.
- 13) It also possesses diuretic activity.
- 14) Its ethanolic extract increases insulin release, thus is helpful in diabetes.
- 15) In Ayurveda, it is considered a female tonic, as it is used in female infertility, it increases libido, cures inflammation of sexual organs, moistens dry tissues of sexual organs, enhances ovulation, prepares womb for conception, prevents miscarriages, acts as postpartum tonic by increasing lactation, and normalises uterus and changing hormones. It is also used in leucorrhoea and menorrhagia.
- 16) In Ayurveda, it has a strong rejuvenating, nurturing, and stabilising effect on excessive air, gas, dryness and agitation in body and mind.
- 17) Its ethanolic extracts possess the cytotoxicity, analgesic, and anti-diarrhoeal properties.