Holostemma ada-kodein K. Schum. (Family-Asclepiadaceae) known, as Palagadda/Jeevanthi/Charivel/Palaikkirai/Atapathien is an endemic plant of our country, especially found in the Kerala region of Western Ghats. It was reported first from Kothur reserve forest and Palode area of Thiruvanthapuram district. The plant is also found in Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh. It remained as an ethnic plant in this region and the people are not aware of its identity and usage. Scientists from Herbal Folklore Research Centre (HFRC) during their ethno-botanical survey noticed the tribe digging the roots and surviving by selling them to traders who come from the near by state of Tamil Nadu. The people do not know the use of the plant and it is considered by them as only a gold in the soil and can be dug whenever they need money. The identity, location and expertise in removing the root is not known to any one in the district, except to the tribe. That became a boon to the plant and the plant is still seen in some hillocks on the western part of Chittoor district. It is completely absent in the eastern region. The brown gold is given to the traders at throw away price, who knew the value of it. More than 100-200 tonnes of dried roots are sent every year from this district alone to Chennai market. What the users do and who is using this is still a mystery to the community, who are the custodians of this treasure.

Morphologically it is a glabrous twining shrub, leaves simple, opposite, petiolate, ovate and entire. Midrib is prominent with a few small glands at its base above. The flowers are large, creamy white to pale pink outside, reddish purple inside and fragrant. Roots long attaining a length of one meter or more irregularly bent, somewhat cylindrical and gradually tapering towards the tip. Thickness of the root varies according to age.

The leaves, flowers and fruits are eaten as vegetable. HFRC is using the roots along with Sathavari (Asparagus racemosus Willd.) and Aswagandha (Withania somnifera Dunal) as immune booster and distributing to the people in their free herbal clinic for the past three years. The powder gives strength and prevents from frequent cold and cough and improves metabolism.

The root goes into many Ayurvedic formulations such as Jeevanthyadi ghritham, Aswagandhadi ghritham, Jeevanthyadiyamakam, Balarishtam, Anuthailam, Punarnavabalsadi kashayam, Chandanadi thailam, etc.
Chemical investigation of root revealed the presence $\alpha$-amyrin, lupeol, $\beta$-sitosterol and 6-amino acids, viz. alanine, aspartic acid, glycine, serine, threonin and valine.

**Propagation**

Recently HFRC took up the propagation of this plant and conducting awareness meetings with the tribes regarding its cultivation and usage. The tribes became interested to protect the plant in hillocks after these trainings and came forward to cultivate the plant in *Vana Samrakshana Samithis* (VSS) of the area where HFRC works. This made HFRC to take up revival of the endangered species *Holostemma ada-kodein* and *Decalepis hamiltonii Wight & Arn.* and distributed about 3000 seedlings of *Decalepis* to 20 VSS groups to propagate them in the near by hillocks and about 3000 seedlings of *Holostemma ada-kodein* to forest department of Andhra Pradesh.

Propagation can be done by seeds and root buds. The seeds are very small, flat and dark brown in colour. A healthy fruit contains 300-350 seeds. Germination commences in about 15 days and completes within one month accounting for 75% germination. Seedlings grown in polythene bags having 6-10 leaves can be transplanted in the field. The root buds are also capable of becoming active normally at the onset of rains. For propagation by roots, 4 cm long root cuttings are buried horizontally in the sandy beds quarter of a centimeter deep; on watering 2-3 buds become active and grow into new plantlets. When the plant becomes 2 leaved the mother root is cut in between and the plantlets are grown in polythene bags. After one month the plants can be taken for transplantation in the main field.

**Cultivation Economics**

The plant attains full growth and produces long thick roots after one year. According to HFRC estimates each plant gives 100-200 grams of dried roots. 20,000 plants can be planted in a hectare of land and the average yield /ha/year is about 2000-4000 kg of dried roots. The local price of dried roots varies from Rs. 80-120/kg. The expected income from one hectare is about Rs. 2,00,000-4,00,000/- in a year.