

Withania somnifera (L) Dunal



Habit: A medium-sized shrub, upto 2m.

Morphology: Herbs perennial, 30-150 cm tall, pubescent with dendritic hairs. Stems woody proximally, erect or reclining, branched, tomentose. Petiole 1-2 cm; leaf blade ovate, obovate, or oblong, 2.5-12 × 2-7 cm, glabrescent adaxially except along midvein, pubescent abaxially, base cuneate, apex acute. Inflorescences subsessile clusters of 4-6 flowers; peduncle obsolete. Pedicel ca. 5 mm. Calyx campanulate, 3-5 mm, tomentose; lobes deltate, 1-2 mm. Corolla yellowish green, narrowly campanulate, 5-8 mm, tomentose at throat; lobes ovate, spreading or recurving, 2-2.5 mm. Filaments ca. 1.8 mm; anthers yellow, ovoid, ca. 1 mm, minutely apiculate. Style exserted. Fruiting calyx becoming brown and translucent, globose or ovoid, truncate at base, 1-2.2 cm; lobes short, somewhat urceolate. Berry shiny, scarlet, globose, 5-8 mm. Seeds drying pale brown, reniformdiscoid, 2-2.5 × 2 mm.

Taxonomy:

Kingdom	Plantae
Division	Angiospermae
Class	Eudicots
Order	Solanales
Family	Solanaceae
Genus	Withania
Species	<i>W. somnifera</i> (L) Dunal

Uses: Roots of Winter cherry are highly acclaimed tonic for brain and nervous system in Ayurveda. Its usage is recommended in preventive health care. It is considered as "Medhya"

which implies to its beneficial effects to the brain. Detail investigations, both clinical and experimental, observed that Ashwagandha acts as an antistress and adaptogenic herb. Regular use of Ashwagandha improves stress tolerance, thereby enhancing the mental capabilities. It is also known to improve the quality of immune functions.

Reference: Indianbiodiversity.org