Summers at their grandma’s home in the village were always full of fun for Rupa and Manu. Lots of open space to run around, play hide and seek under the cover of so many trees, run behind the colourful butterflies, tease the monkeys, milk the cows or simply bask in nature.... oh, what joy! To top it all, they were not locked up inside the four walls of the house during noon time, but had the liberty of playing outdoors after lunch, when the elders wanted to have their siesta.

It was one of those lazy noon days, when Rupa was about to doze off under the cool shade of the old peepal tree while reading her story book, that her trance was broken off with a shrill sound. There, Manu was running towards her, with anxiety and fear written all over his face. "What happened, did you see a ghost somewhere", asked Rupa in a concerned tone. "It’s worse than a ghost, they are coming, and they are going to take away all our friends. please help, where is Bantu mama, he will be able to help us", saying this Manu ran inside. Rupa was dazed and in that state, without questioning, she too followed him ....

"Bantu mama, I just saw some people coming towards our estate, they have already marked some old trees which they are going to cut down and use the wood for making furniture” said Manu, his face was flushed with fear. “Oh no, not again, these people have no permission to cut down on our personal trees, wait, I’ll just call up our local forest officer to stop these goons, meanwhile, you kids, alert and gather all your friends and try to sabotage those people’s evil plans”, saying this, Bantu mama hurriedly started making the phone calls.

Meanwhile, Rupa and Manu sneaked out quietly to call all their friends from neighbouring estates and soon there was a mini army of children with a determination writ on their face, marching towards saving their beloved trees. Taking cue from the famous Chipko movement that they had read about in their history class, Rupa with five other girls formed a circle around the old banyan tree that was marked by the tree fellers; while Manu and three other boys went on to hug their favourite tamarind tree.

The tree fellers were caught unaware and they were not able to cut any of the trees and had to leave empty handed soon after the forest officer came with the court order for not cutting down any trees on private properties. And that’s how the trees are saved for the day! All this was too much of an excitement for Rupa in a day, and by evening she was too exhausted. Next morning, she woke up screaming as she had a nightmare about her favourite trees being cut mercilessly. Her body was hot with fever and she was shivering.

Grandma was called for and she came with her magical ‘kashaya’ (decoction) for Rupa to drink. “Drink this, and you will be fine child”. Without questioning, Rupa drank the whole cup with a questioning look in her eyes. “What’s bothering you my child now”, grandma asked her lovingly. “This decoction you gave me, did you purchase it from the chemist or is it homemade” asked Rupa although she knew the answer in the heart of her hearts. “Yes beta, you are right in your concern, all the roots that have gone into making this decoction have been collected from our estate wilderness only, and in fact some of them have now become so rare that in the coming years, there would be nothing left for the future generations”. “Efforts from children like you would go in a long way in saving our medicinal heritage from the forests, now you take care and rest”.....

The decoction that Rupa had was Dasamoolaristam, a decoction from 10 roots, and one of them was “Salaparni”......
Salaparni or Pseudarthria viscida is a valuable ethno medicinal plant, one among the “Dasamoola” (10 roots) of Ayurveda, mentioned in most of the ancient scriptures. It is a major component in many Ayurvedic preparations like Dasamoolarishita, Agastya haritaki rasayana, Anu thaila, Brahma rasayana, Sudarshana churna, Narayana thaila and Dhanvanthara ghrita.

The name originated due to its similarity to the leaves (tri-foliate) to that of leaves of sala tree (Shorea robusta). It belongs to family Fabaceae.

sood-ARTH-ree-uh -- from Greek pseudes(false) and anthron (joint): referring to the pods VIS-kid-ah -- meaning, sticky

Conservation Concern: Pseudarthria viscida has high commercial and medicinal values, it has been included in the group of high trade sourced medicinal plants from Western Ghats and is also incorporated in the 100-Red Listed medical plants of conservation concern in India. The excessive collection has resulted in gradual disappearance of this plant from its natural habitat and at present its number is highly reduced in the wild.

Where am I found?

Globally, I am distributed in the Indo-Malaysian region and Sri Lanka. In India, I have been recorded in the states of Gujarat, Orissa, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. I am mainly seen in areas from southwards of the river Godavari, mainly in Kerala, where I am found in areas of sea level to up to that of 3.000 feet in the hills.
How do I look like?

I am a perennial under shrub which grows all over India up to 1000 metres altitude. I can attain the height of about 60-120 cm. My branches are slender and covered with minute white hair. My leaves are 7.5-15 cm long and 2.5-5 cm broad, trifoliate, ovate-oblone, hairy and densely grey-silky beneath. My flowers are purplish or pink, in 15-30 cm long axillary racemes. My fruits are pods, oblong, flattened and covered with sticky hair. My seeds are 4-6, compressed and brownish black in colour. I flower in the month of May.

Action on different systems: Salaparni is used for curing diseases of nervous system, digestive system, rheumatic, cardiovascular system, reproductive system, respiratory system and urinary system.

What are my Medicinal Uses?

The whole plant of Salaparni is used for medicinal purpose. The herb is seldom used externally. Internally it is useful in vast range of diseases.

- The decoction works well, with asafoetida and salt, in paralysis.
- In asthma and cough, the decoction of dasamula is given along with the powder of erand (castor) roots.
- The decoction of laghu pancamula (five minor roots) i.e. roots of Salaparni, (prsniparni), Kantakari, Brhati and Gokura, is benevolent in the treatment of urinary calculi (stones) and dysuria.
- In hysteria, the decoction of dasamula is given along with ghee, with great benefit.
- It is a valuable panacea from heart diseases and blood disorders. In heart diseases, associated with palpitations, Salaparni ksirapaka - medicated milk preparation of the herb, is extremely beneficial.
- Salaparni is a keen stimulant for digestive system and is used in digestive ailments like anorexia, flatulence, diarrhea, vomiting and piles.
- It effectively arrests the bleeding and alleviates edema.
- Salaparni is salutory in general debility as a general tonic and in tuberculosis, especially with tissue and works as mucolytic also as well.
- It is salubrious as a pain-killer in general body ache.
- It also works well as anti-toxin in poisoning; in bites like that of snake and scorpion bites.
- The herb is widely used in vata disorders and is the best nervine.
- The herb is useful in fever, especially in typhoid.