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Cover story

***Bacopa monnieri* (L) Pennel (Scrophulariaceae)**

**Sinhala: Lunuwila; Tamil: Pirami; Hindi: Brahmi;
English: Thyme-leaved gratiola**

Brahmi or Lunuwila possesses numerous medicinal properties. Its uses are documented in ancient Ayurvedic texts and the herb has been widely used to promote the intellect, and treat neurological and mental problems. This plant is commonly distributed in moist and damp areas on the edges of streams and water trenches. It is a prostrate, glabrous and fleshy herb. The leaves are sessile, soft, and succulent up to 2.5 mm long with obscure venation. The stem is 10-30 cm long and 1-2 mm thick, with soft ascending branches. Flowers white or blue with purple veins, axillary and solitary on peduncles usually longer than the leaves. Fruits ovoid, acute capsules include in the persistent calyx.

The herb is mainly used to promote intellect and as a potent nervine, cardiogenic and diuretic. Leaves and whole plant are used in Indian tribal veterinary medicine, especially in the treatment of epilepsy.

Brahmine and Herpestine are major alkaloid present in the aerial parts. Flavonoid such as glucuronyl-7-apigenin and glucuronyl-7-luteolin are present. Bacosides and Bacosaponins are important saponin constituents.

Brahmi has the capacity to improve the higher order cognitive processes and improve learning capability. It also has anxiolytic activity, anti depressant activity, intellect promoting activity, antioxidant property, analgesic activity, spasmolytic activity, and bronchodilatory activity.

The original paper on page 55 and review paper on page 91 describe the findings of scientific studies of *B. monnieri*.

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