BUSH PASSION FRUIT

Bush Passion Fruit is a creeping plant belonging to the genus *Passiflora foetida*. Its leaves and flowers are small and attractive. Other names for this plant include Wild Water Lemon, Stinking Passion Flower, Wild Passion fruit and Love-in-a-mist in English; Buah Tikus in Malaysia; Timun Padang in Indonesia; and Kha Tok Rok in Thailand. In Tamil Nadu, it is also known as Sirupunaikalli, Kodimathulai, and Muparisavalli.

It's native to Southeast Asia, Central America, Central Africa, and tropical Pacific regions. Its stem is hairy and cylindrical, growing 1.5–6.0 meters long. The stem is green when young and turns dark brown and woody when mature. It has coiled 'climbing tendrils' emerging from the stem that wrap around other trees, fences, or branches. These tendrils are very strong, ensuring the plant stays at the top to get sunlight. The leaves are resembling a cat's footprints because of its shape, light green, thick, smooth on the top surface, and rough on the underside.

The flower is bisexual, lilac-shaped with white petals and purple or orange in the centre. It has many white-yellow stamens radiating in the middle, and the flower stalk is long, supported by a tendril. Flowers bloom year-round, especially in the dry season, and less during the rainy season. They open from early morning (sunrise) until noon, then close. Uniquely, the flower bud is covered by a hairy or net-like membrane before opening. The fruit is round, green when young, turning yellow when ripe (some species orange or reddish). Usually, there are 1–3 fruits per stalk. The skin is thin and airtight, containing black seeds coated in sweet pulp. The pulp and seeds are eaten together—swallowed whole or chewed—after picking. The fruit is generally edible when fully ripe. The fully ripe fruit makes a 'pop' sound when squeezed between both palms (clapped) or because, when fully ripe, the fruit bursts to release its seeds.

This plant reproduces through seeds dispersed by animals, self-ejection, and humans. The black, mature seeds dry out, and when the fruit bursts, they are flung out and germinate when conditions are right. There are 12 genera and nearly 200 species worldwide in the Passifloraceae family, most of which are not suitable for eating or cultivation. Passiflora regularise is a species reported suitable for planting as an attractive ornamental in the gardens.

It is commonly described in traditional Tamil/Siddha sources as a plant with uses for constipation, indigestion, bloating, vomiting, stomach pain, gas, and digestive weakness. Some sources also mention it for asthma, menstrual problems, womb-related complaints, cough, and intestinal worms.

Common traditional uses

- Leaf decoction for stomach discomfort, gas, and indigestion.
- Fruit pulp for constipation and bowel regularity.
- Flower tea or dried flower powder for intestinal worms and ulcers.
- Seed powder is traditionally mentioned for male sexual vitality and nerve strength.