

**DIVERSITY AND ETHNOMEDICINAL USES OF *KEKIRI*:
AN ETHNOBOTANICAL PERSPECTIVE**

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Kekiri (*Cucumis melo* L.) is a commonly consumed fruit in Sri Lanka, holds a significant place in local dietary and traditional medicinal practices. Despite its widespread use, there is limited scientific documentation regarding its varieties and ethnomedical relevance. In traditional medicine, different parts of *Kekiri* have been used for their diuretic and anti-urolithic properties. The study aims to combine the scattered knowledge on the ethnomedical significance of *Kekiri* by integrating it with existing ethnobotanical knowledge. The study is a narrative literature review based on data gathered from authentic texts, published research articles, journals and text related to traditional medical system of Sri Lanka. The highest number of *Kekiri* varieties is found in '*Raja Nighantu*', which lists 14 types. Dravyaguna Vignana' text by P.V. Sharma reported five varieties. In the Sri Lankan context, nine varieties are mentioned in ancient Ola leaf manuscripts. Additionally, 'Medicinal Plants (Indigenous and Exotic) used in Ceylon' reported five varieties of *Kekiri*; *Gon kekiri*, *Hen kekiri*, *Kaudu kekiri*, *Hin kekiri* and *Pipingnga*. '*Deshiya Vaidya Shabdakoshaya*' reported four commonly used varieties of *Kekiri*: *Hen kekiri*, *Sini kekiri*, *Thikta kekiri*, and *Gon kekiri*. Yet, only three botanically identified varieties are recorded in the National Herbarium in Peradeniya. Although the botanical identity is unclear, its medicinal uses have been documented under vernacular names of the plant. *Kekiri* varieties are utilized in the management of urinary track disorders, diabetes mellitus, skin diseases etc. Notably, the seeds are known for their effectiveness in dissolving urinary stones, while the leaves, roots, and fruit pulp have also been utilized for medicinal purposes. These ethnobotanically identified varieties will serve as a foundational reference for future research, encouraging phytochemical and clinical validation of their traditional uses.

Keywords: *Kekiri*, *Cucumis melo*, *Karkati*, Ethnobotanical