

## UTTARAKHAND

**State Flower:** Brahma Kamal

**Botanical Name:** *Saussurea obvallata* (DC.) Edgew.

**Common Names:** King of Himalayan flowers, Sacred Saussurea (English); Brahma Kamal (Hindi); Brahma Kamal (Sanskrit).

**Family:** Asteraceae

**Etymology:** The generic name, '**Saussurea**' is named after the Swedish plant taxonomist, Horace Benedict de Saussure; specific epithet '**obvallata**' is derived from 'obvallatus', meaning surrounded by wall referring to involucriform bracts.



***Saussurea obvallata*** (DC.) Sch.Bip.

**Botanical Description:** A small perennial herb growing up to 60 cm high. Stems erect, ribbed, hollow, usually purplish to reddish brown. Leaves are both basal and cauline; basal leaves are rosulate, petiolate, elliptic-spathulate or lanceolate, 10 – 25 × 1 – 5.5 cm, slightly broadened and sheathing at base, denticulate-cuspidate and scarious at margins, acute to obtuse or cuspidate at apex. Inflorescences with 2 to many discoid capitula, terminal, enclosed by creamy white or pale yellow involucriform bracts. Florets are bisexual. Corolla is tubular with linear-lanceolate lobes, bluish purple or violet. Cypselae are oblong or obovoid with white pappus, pale creamy, brown or greyish.

**Flowering & Fruiting:** July – September.

**Range of Distribution:** It occurs in alpine meadows of the Himalayas, extending from Jammu and Kashmir to Arunachal Pradesh. It is also distributed in Bhutan, China, Nepal and Pakistan, at altitudes between 3700 and 4600 m.

**Traditional Uses:** The plant is considered sacred. The inflorescences and the flowers are offered to local deities, Goddess Ganga and Lord Shiva. It is also used to decorate the temples in festive occasions like 'Savan-Janmasthanmi'.

**Medicinal Uses:** This plant has several medicinal uses. The ground roots are applied to cure cuts and wounds. Floral buds and roots are used as medicines in leucoderma, urinary troubles, bone fractures, wounds, bone pain, cough and cold, hydrocele, reproductive disorder and digestive problems. Floral buds are also used in boils. Whole plant is used as veterinary medicine in haematuria. In Tawang, the dried powder or paste of the plant is used in the treatment of skin diseases.

**Ceremonial Uses:** The flower of 'Brahma Kamal' is lithographed in memento and presented to dignitaries and celebrities during the various official functions of Uttarakhand state.

**Note:** The plant can be propagated by natural process of seed germination.

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