Beleric Myraball

Terminalia bellirica

Code: TREE-D4A649509729321 **Location:** XIM University Campus **Local / Vernacular name:** ବାହାଡା

Botanical Details

Leaf habit: Deciduous Flowers / Fruits: small, creamy-white or greenish-yellow flowers with a strong, pungent odor; fruit is a globular, greyish-brown drupe covered in fine velvety hair, containing a single hard stone. Native range: Native to the Indian subcontinent, Southeast Asia (Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam), and Southern China; commonly found in mixed deciduous forests and plains.

Uses & Importance

Ecological: Terminalia bellirica is a massive deciduous tree that serves as a cornerstone of the monsoon forest ecosystem. It is a "heavyweight" in carbon sequestration, with its large trunk and expansive canopy storing significant amounts of atmospheric carbon. Ecologically, it is famous for its association with the Great Indian Hornbill and other large frugivorous birds that rely on its fruit for sustenance. The tree provides critical nesting sites due to its height and the natural hollows that form in older specimens. Its deep and wide-spreading root system is a powerful tool for soil stabilization, particularly in the foothills and riverine tracts where it naturally occurs, preventing landslides and siltation of water bodies. As a deciduous species, it contributes a massive amount of leaf litter to the forest floor; these leaves are rich in tannins and minerals, which, upon decomposition, significantly alter the soil chemistry to support a specific range of understory fungi and microbial life. Its role in maintaining the structural integrity of tropical mixed deciduous forests makes it an indispensable species for regional biodiversity conservation and watershed management.

Medicinal: In Ayurveda, Terminalia bellirica is known as "Bibhitaki," which translates to "the one that keeps you away from diseases." It is most famous as one of the three ingredients in Triphala, the world’s most renowned Ayurvedic polyherbal formulation. The fruit rind is exceptionally rich in gallic acid, ellagic acid, and chebulagic acid, which provide potent antioxidant and anti-inflammatory benefits. It is the primary "Kapha-pacifying" herb, traditionally used to treat respiratory ailments such as chronic bronchitis, asthma, and sore throats by acting as an expectorant. For digestive health, it acts as a mild laxative while also possessing antimicrobial properties that combat intestinal parasites. Modern research has highlighted its hepatoprotective qualities, showing its ability to protect the liver from chemical toxins, and its potential in managing hyperuricemia (gout) by inhibiting the enzyme xanthine oxidase. Additionally, the seed oil is used topically in traditional medicine to treat skin diseases and promote hair growth, while the bark is used to stop bleeding in wounds. Its multifaceted pharmacological profile ensures its status as a foundational pillar of holistic internal medicine.

Cultural: The Baheda tree holds a deep, somewhat mystical place in Indian culture and folklore. In ancient Sanskrit texts, it is often associated with the "Dice" used in the Mahabharata, as the nuts were traditionally used as game pieces. Culturally, it is seen as a tree of protection and endurance; however, unlike its cousin the Peepal, it is sometimes viewed with a sense of "awe and distance" in village folklore, believed to be the dwelling of specific woodland spirits. In many tribal communities, particularly in Central India, the tree is a vital source of livelihood; the fruits are collected from the forest floor to be sold for tanning and dyeing industries due to their high tannin content. The wood, though not highly durable for furniture, is traditionally used for making packing cases and agricultural implements. The tree's inclusion in the "Triphala" triad cements its cultural identity as a "guardian of longevity," a plant that connects the health of the individual to the vast, wild bounty of the Indian forest. Its majestic presence along ancient trade routes has made it a historical landmark for travelers and a symbol of the enduring strength of the tropical landscape.

Location

GPS: 20.15860192, 85.76535449

Directions: https://www.google.com/maps/dir/?api=1&travelmode=walking&destination=20.15860192%2C85.76535449