



Rasi Vanam

(Makaram)
Indian Rose Wood Tree

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Botanical Name: *Dalbergia latifolia* Roxb.

Tamil Name: Thodagathi

Sanskrit Name: Shinshapa

English Name: Indian Rose wood

Habitat

Deciduous trees, to 25 m high, bark 10-15 mm thick, grey, smooth with short irregular cracks, exfoliating in thin fibrous longitudinal flakes; blaze yellow, turning to yellow-brown. Leaves imparipinnate, rarely 1-foliolate, alternate; stipules small, lateral, deciduous; rachis 7.5-20.5 cm, slender, pulvinate, glabrous; leaflets 3-9, alternate, exstipulate; petiolule up to 10 mm, stout, grooved above, glabrous; lamina 2.5-10 x 2.5-10 cm, orbicular, base acute or very rarely truncate, apex obtuse or emarginate, margin entire, glabrous, glaucous beneath, coriaceous; lateral nerves 5-10 pairs, pinnate, slender, ascending, prominent, intercostae reticulate, faint. Flowers bisexual, 5-6 mm long, white, in short corymbose panicles from the axils of fallen leaves of previous years shoot; bracteoles small, deciduous; calyx tube campanulate; lobes 5, subequal, upper 2 connate, lateral obtuse, lower acute; petals 5, standard petal obovate, cuneate at base, reflexed, wings 6 x 2.5 mm, clawed, base auricled, keel 6 mm long, hastate, united, clawed; stamens 9, monadelphous; staminal tube 4 mm, split open one side; ovary stipitate, inferior, 5 - 7 mm, glabrous, 1-celled, ovules 1-few; style slender, incurved, glabrous; stigma capitate. Fruit a pod, 5-7.5 x 1.5-1.8 cm, oblong-lanceolate, tip obtuse, distinctly marked in the place of seeds, but not wrinkled, indehiscent; seeds 1-4, Reniform, brown. (India Biodiversity Portal.com).



Religious Association

The **Indian rosewood tree** has also long been associated with the subject of astrology under the Rasi *Makara* (**Makaram**).

Medicinal uses and other benefits



There is considerable tribal population in Chhattisgarh state in Jashpur district. The tribal people used the traditional medicine and ethno medicine. The Indian rose wood tree leaf extract is used orally for treatment of Spermatorrhoea disorder (Neeli Rose Ekka *et.al.*, 2014).

Malayali tribal in Salem District, Tamil Nadu prepare a concoction by grinding Indian rose wood tree stem bark with garlic and pepper for ethno-veterinary medicine for curing animals (such as cow and goat)

which do not graze properly (Selvaraj. A., *et.al.*, 2011).

The bark and leaf of the Indian rose wood tree is very useful in the treatment of leprosy (Padal. S.B. *et.al.*, 2010). Another scientific fact is that *Dalbergia latifolia* bark is mainly used for treatment of stomach ache and digestive system disorders (Nallella Sreeramulu *et.al.*, 2013).

Other uses

The rosewood is fragrant and very hard wood. Hence it is difficult to work because of its high density. The heart wood is considered to be very durable and can withstand attacks by termites and worms. The woods are used to make high quality furniture, paneling, veneers, interior and exterior joinery. Other items which can be made are knife handles, musical instruments, agricultural implements, calico-printing blocks, mathematical instruments and boat keels and screws (<http://www.worldagroforestry.org>).

Conclusion

This tree is native to tropical Asia ranging from Nepal through India to Java in Indonesia. It grows well in tropical Africa though on small scale and is used mainly for ornamental purposes in botanical gardens (<https://www.prota4u.org>). The plant species provide good shade in the coffee plantations and planted as avenue trees. This tree is a good nitrogen fixing agent and soil improver. (<http://www.worldagroforestry.org>). The species is included in the IUCN Red list as vulnerable. <https://www.prota4u.org>]. This plant species must be planted widely through forest and highways department, self help groups and other VOs.

