Nakshatra Vanam

Hastha - Indian Wild Mango

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Botanical Name: *Spondias pinnata* (L. f.) Kurz
Tamil Name: Pulima
Sanskrit Name: Amraatakah
English Name: Indian Hog Plum or Indian Wild Mango

Habitat:

Deciduous trees, to 25 m high, bark 15-25 mm thick, surface grey to pale brown, smooth, vertically striated; outer bark 1 mm thick, dead, corky; inner bark semi fibrous, pink, streaked with white; blaze pink; exudation colour less, gummy. Leaves imparipinnate, alternate, clustered at the end of branches, estipulate; rachis 25-45 cm, slender, glabrous, swollen at base; leaflets 5-21, opposite or sub-opposite; petiolule 2-8 mm long, slender, glabrous; lamina 4-23 x 2.5-10 cm, oblong, elliptic or elliptic-oblong, base obtuse, sub-acute, oblique or round, apex acuminate or obtusely acuminate, margin entire, glabrous, chartaceous or membranous; lateral nerves many, parallel, close, slender, prominent, connected by an intramarginal nerve, intercostae reticulate. Flowers polygamous, yellowish-white, subsessile, in terminal spreading panicles; calyx small; lobes 5, imbricate, deciduous; petals 5, oblong, glabrous, spreading, valvate; disc thick, annular, 10-crenate; stamens 10, inserted below the disc; filaments slender; anthers versatile; ovary ovoid or subglobose, superior, immersed in the disc, 5-celled, 1 ovule in each cell, pendulous; styles 5, connivent; stigma spreading. Fruit a fleshy drupe, 3.8-5 cm long, yellow, endocarp woody surround by longitudinal interwoven fibers; seeds 1-3, of which only one is perfect, pendulous, oblong. (https://Indiabiodiversity.org/).

Religious association:

The Indian wild mango has long been associated with the subject of astrology under the constellation *Hastha (Hastham*).

Medicinal uses and other benefits:

The wild mango belongs to the family Anacardiaceae. It is an evergreen deciduous tree which grows throughout India, Sri Lanka and South-East Asia. The tree has numerous medicinal uses, for example: for curing menstrual disease, the bark powder is mixed with garlic, pepper and milk and taken internally, as reported by M. Parinitha et.al., 2003. In another instance, stem bark juice can be mixed with curd and taken internally in an empty stomach as an anthelmintic as reported by M. J. Bhandari et.al.,1995. Similarly, the bark of the tree can be usefully used in the treatment of diarrhea, biliousness, menstrual disorders, arthritis, tuberculosis and for treatment of painful joints. The bark paste can be effectively used in the treatment of stomach and body pain, articular and muscular rheumatism, dysentery and ringworm and skin diseases. The juice of the leaves can be use to cure earache.

The fruit can be used as an astringent, blood purifier. antiscorbutic and curing dyspepsia (Khare, 2007). The Wealth of India – A Dictionary of Indian Raw Materials, published in 1992 by the Publications and Information Directorate explains the nutritional value of the fruit containing, moisture – 90.3; protein – 0.7; fat – 3.0; fibre – 1.0; carbohydrates – 4.5; mineral matter – 0.5%; calcium – 36.0; phosphorous – 11.0; iron – 3.9; thiamine – 0.02; riboflavin – 0.02; nicotinic acid – 0.3; Vitamin C – 21.0 mg./100g and Vitamin A – 450 I.U./100g.

The whole tree Spondias pinnata

Fruits in an Indian Wild Mango Tree

Other uses:

The wood of the wild mango tree can be used very effectively in construction, mouldings, interior finishing, drawers, turnery, articles, carvings and core stock of plywood. The wild mango wood is also used in the making of matchsticks, matchboxes, boxes and crates. The leaves and fruit of the tree are also given as food for pigs. The tree can also be used to fence farms and also gives very good shade (Florido HB et.al., 2003).

Conclusion:

Spondias pinnata grows well in its natural habitat. There is heavy demand due to domestic consumption. Hence it is very essential to increase the forest cover of this species since it can be a good source of income to the rural people. Value can be added by making juice and squash and pickles. The wild fruits of this species are very useful in the diet of the common man and can also be used as medicine in the tribal and rural area. This tree plays an important role in the conservation of biodiversity of the country. Concerted efforts should be undertaken by government agencies so that this species can be sustainably utilized and conserved.

Schools and colleges can encourage the growth of this species through the National Green Crops (NGC) and National Service Scheme (NSS) so that the forest cover of this species can be considerably increased, thus benefiting the common people. Consumption of the fruit ensures a balance diet and good health for all.