



Rasi Vanam Rishabha - Devil Tree



M. Subramanian
Project Officer

C.P.R. Environmental Education Centre
Chennai

Botanical Name: *Alstonia scholaris* (L.) R. Br.

Tamil Name: Ezhilaipalai

Sanskrit Name: Saptaparna

English Name: Devil Tree / Blackboard Tree

Habitat

Large trees; height about 30 m; bark 10-15 mm thick, surface grey-brown, irregularly cracked and shallowly fissured, subverrucose, lenticellate; blaze creamy yellow, outer layer thin, corky, inner layer brittle; latex milky white; branch-lets whorled. Leaves simple, whorled, estipulate; petiole 5-12 mm long, stout, glabrous; lamina 5-20 x 3-7 cm, obovate, oblanceolate or obovate-oblong; base cuneate or attenuate; apex obtuse or emarginate; margin entire, glabrous, subcoriaceous; lateral nerves many, slender, prominent, glabrous, parallel, looped near the margin forming intra-marginal nerves; inter-



costae reticulate, obscure. Flower bisexual, 10-12 mm long, greenish-white in terminal umbellate cymes; calyx cupular, lobes 5, ovate, unequal, obtuse, puberulous, glandular; corolla salver shaped, 4 mm across, lobes 5, obovate to orbicular, creamy yellow, spreading; stamens 5, included; anthers narrowly cordate; disc obscure; carpels 2, free, ovules many; style filiform; stigma obconic. Fruit of two linear, narrow, pendulous follicular mericarps, green, 30-40 cm long; seeds 5-6 mm long, flat, comate at both ends (India Biodiversity Portal.com).

Religious Association

The devil tree has been associated with the subject of astrology under the constellation *Rishabha* (**Rishabham**).

Medicinal uses and other benefits

The smooth juice (*Alstonia scholaris*) is exceptionally helpful in the treatment of ulcers and cleaning of wounds. The bark of the *Alstonia scholaris* is utilized as a part of Ayurvedic medication to treat fever, intestinal sickness, inconveniences in absorption, tumours, ulcers and asthma. This tree root and bark has various medicinal uses: astringent tonic, alterative, anti-diarrhoeaticum and anti-periodicum. Furthermore, leaves are utilized in the treatment of skin maladies (natureconservation.in).

Other uses



The heartwood is cream to light yellow; it is not unmistakable from the wide band of sapwood. The surface is genuinely fine however factor; the grain is even, in some cases curved or wavy; the wood frequently has a solid, faintly sweetish smell and an intense taste. The wood is light in weight, delicate, it is not extremely sturdy, with one report saying it is not assaulted by creepy crawlies, while another says it is at risk to termites, pinhole and marine borers and the sapwood. It is extremely at risk to blue stain, so should be prepared rapidly. The wood is anything but difficult to work, however cross areas must be

smoothed with a remarkably sharp apparatus. This tree is the most vital wellspring of pula timber. It is utilized for light development, roofs, design making, core stock, pressed wood, cutting and mouldings. The wood is likewise utilized for making caskets in Sri Lanka and school chalkboards in Myanmar. It is viewed as reasonable for mash and paper generation. The tree has been prescribed as a fuelwood animal category for the Patana terrains of Sri Lanka (tropical. the ferns.info).

Conclusion

Alstonia is an evergreen quickly growing tree, which grows up to 30 m tall. It develops better under moist, warm atmosphere yet it cannot stand in water logging. This tree is recommended for planting in parks, gardens and inside yards. It is also suitable for roadside planting and it has been widely planted in India for the future generations (Jagtapnursery.com).

