



Herbal Garden (Muligai Vanam)

Drumstick Tree



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Botanical Name: *Moringa oleifera* Lam.
Tamil Name: Murungai
Sanskrit Name: Sigru Shobhanjan
English Name: Drumstick Tree

Habitat

This is a middle sized soft tree with thick corky bark. Leaves compound, with pale green leaflets when young, become darker when older and yellow at the fall period. Generally planted in the home stead, also use as hedge as cuttings propagate easily, found as escape in the forest. Flowers small, whitish, honey scented. Fruit is a capsule about 9 - 20 inch. long. (<https://indiabiodiversity.org>).

Importance of Drumstick tree

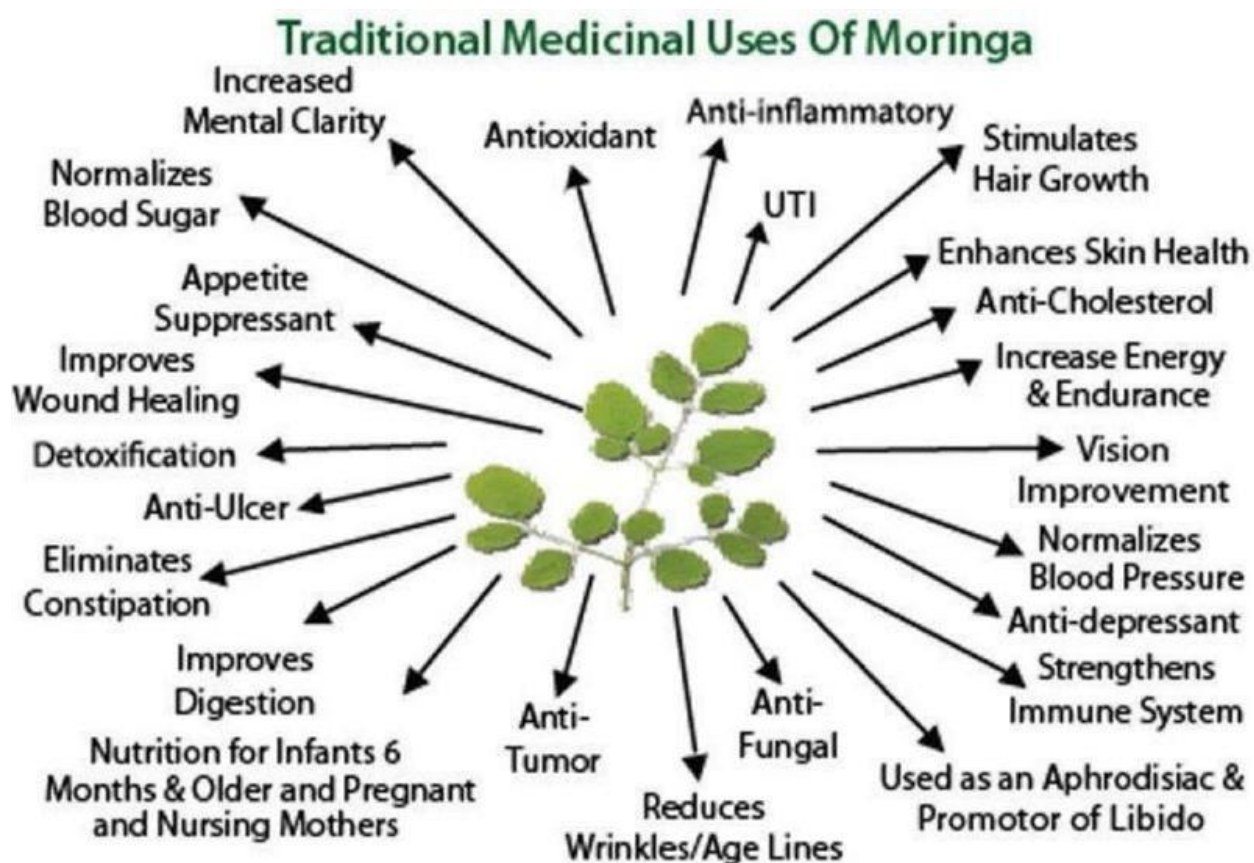
The Drumstick (*Moringa oleifera*) forms an important part of the *Siddha* and Ayurvedic medicine which are indigenous in India. Hence it is found all the way from the Himalayas to Kanyakumari. It is known as *Brimma Vriksham* by the *Siddars* (Vikatan.com). *Moringa oleifera* is also found in many tropical countries. This moringa species grows abundantly in the southern states of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh. However, there are certain problems connected with its cultivation. These are a relatively long pre-fruit bearing period, non availability of planting materials (stem cuttings), requirement of greater number of rainy days, and susceptibility to pests and diseases. Various significant species of *moringa* are Moolanur moringa, Valayapatti moringa, Chavakacheri moringa, seemai moringa, Jaffna type, Kattumurungai, Kodikkalmurungai, Palmurungai, Punamurungai, Palamedu moringa, etc. (<http://agritech.tnau.ac.in>).



Moringa from Olakuda village in Rameswaram island are also famous in Tamilnadu.

Medicinal uses and other benefits

Moringa oleifera leaves and pods contain a wealth of vitamins, proteins, minerals. They are a good source of essential amino acids which are the building blocks of proteins. Hence this species can play an important role in combating malnutrition. According to Dr. Jed W. Fahey et.al., moringa pods contain a good amount of vitamins like vitamin A, vitamin B1 (thiamine), B2 (riboflavin), B3 (niacin), B6 (folate) and vitamin C (ascorbic acid). It also contains a significant amount of calcium, potassium, iron, magnesium, phosphorus and zinc. However, it contains very low amount of fats and very little cholesterol. (Meenakshi Nagdeve, 2019).



The drumstick flowers can be ground and mixed with hot milk and taken for 48 days. This will improve male fertility. This drumstick flower can be taken as food or medicine; it can also be taken along with *arai keerai* in equal measure which will be good for health. Drumstick flower can be used in paste form also. Either way, if it is consumed in any form, it will cure diabetes also. Drumstick flower juice will reduce body heat. Drumstick flowers can again be powdered and heated with milk for consumption both in the morning and evening. If this practice is regularly done, it will enable the children to improve their memory power as well as prevent memory loss for the older people.

Other Uses

The *moringa* seeds are used to clean water for sanitation purposes. *Moringa* seeds are a natural proven water purifier. It has the property to reduce the incidence of water borne diseases. *Moringa* seeds have got the unique properties of producing positive charges like magnets and also attracting negative elements of bacteria and other toxic particles. A new system of purifying water involves the use of *moringa* seeds. This will ensure the availability of clean water to many sections of the society. (www.globalgiving.org).



Conclusion

The *moringa* tree species grows all over country, especially in the southern states and also is known as a fast growing tree. Theni, Karur, Pudukkottai districts are famous for *moringa* species cultivation in the agricultural lands by farmers in Tamilnadu. This species is a good source of income for the farmers and local people. The Tamilnadu Agricultural Department is encouraging the growth of this species. TNAU has developed short term growing seeds that are available in the market. It has multi-nutrition values of species to develop in each and every house. The whole tree is very useful for humans. The government also provides for subsidies for growing the species. *Moringa* species has proven to be a good source of income for low and middle level farmers. Hence it should be propagated and full benefit of this tree can be reaped by all sections of the society.

