



Nakshatra Vanam

Moola - Indian Black Wood



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Botanical Name: *Hardwickia binata* Roxb.

Tamil Name: Aacha

Sanskrit Name: Anjan

English Name: Indian Black Wood

Habitat

Gregarious deciduous trees, bark dark brown, rough, with irregular cracks; branchlets slender, drooping. Leaves alternate, 2-foliolate; stipules small, lateral, cauducous; rachis 8-75 mm long, slender, swollen at base and at tip, glabrous, estipellate; lamina 2-6 x 0.9-3.5 cm, sessile, with a minute bristle in between, obliquely ovate or obliquely oblong-ovate, base obliquely acute, apex obtuse, margin entire, glabrous, coriaceous; nerves 4-5 from base, arcuate, slender, prominent, intercostae reticulate, prominent. Flowers bisexual, greenish-yellow, in lax racemose panicles; bracts minute; bracteoles scale like; calyx tube scarcely any; lobes usually 5, orbicular, petaloid, round the small basal disc, much imbricate; petals 0; stamens 10, alternately longer and shorter; filaments filiform; anthers versatile; ovary half inferior, sessile, free, ovules 2; style filiform, stigma large, peltate. Fruit a pod, 50-80 x 10-12 mm, oblong-lanceolate, the seed at the apex where the pod dehisces, the base samaroid; seed pendulous, obovate, compressed, 2-furrowed. (<https://Indiabiodiversity.org/>).



Religious association

The Indian black wood (*Hardwickia binata*) has long been associated with the subject of astrology under the constellation *Moola* (*Moolam*).

Medicinal uses and other benefits

The bark of the tree is rich in tannins and is an astringent. It is very useful in the treatment of diarrhoea, worms, indigestion and leprosy (Salai Senthilkumar M. S., *et.al* 2014). The gum of the Indian black wood tree can be effectively used in the treatment of gonorrhoea. A decoction made of the bark of the tree is useful in the treatment of piles, toxemia, skin diseases and dysentery. www.pitchandikulam-herbarium.org. According to an Ethno-veterinary study by (D. A. Patil *et.al* 2010) to increase the milk production, cattle have to be fed with the leaves of *hardwickia binata*.



Indian Black Wood tree at the Mangala Vanam, Rameswaram

Other Uses

Black wood is one of the hardest and heaviest of woods found in India. It is dark reddish brown in colour. Hence it is different from the thin band of white sapwood. It is closely grained and hence difficult to season. For this reason, it is very durable. The wood is used in making beams and mine props, bridges and house construction, agricultural tools, carts and wheel work. The bark of the tree contains strong fiber which can be gainfully used in making ropes, paper, cordage and sails. The branches of the tree can also be used as fire wood. (www.worldagroforestry.org).



Beautiful Furniture from Indian Black Wood



Conclusion

India is home to many indigenous and native tree species. Among them is *Hardwickia binata*, a handsome deciduous tree. However, in recent years, this tree is slowly becoming endemic. The timber of the tree is hard, heavy and very strong. Hence it is known by the trade name of *anjan* in India. This tree is the ideal species to be used in reforestation programmes in drought affected areas. However, there is scope of planting the seedling in cyclone affected areas, river banks, ponds, lakes, boundaries of schools and colleges, highways, parks, forests and agricultural fields. This tree is very useful in conservation efforts, and preservation of the environment. The future generations have to be trained in cultivating this species so that it is protected.

