



Herbal Garden (Muligai Vanam)



Seethapalam

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Botanical Name	:	<i>Annona squamosa</i> L.
Tamil Name	:	Seethapalam
Sanskrit Name	:	Sitaphal
English Name	:	Custard apple

Distribution and Habitat

Annona squamosa (L.) a well-branched small to medium tree belongs to the family Annonaceae. The plant is native to the West Indies and is grown throughout the tropics. It is best suited to a hot and relatively dry climate. It is cultivated extensively in India for its fruit. The tree is very common in the dry deciduous forests of central India, Rajasthan, Gujarat, West Bengal, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, and the Deccan Plateau.



It is also known as the poor man's apple. *A. squamosa* is an ever-green tree reaching 3–8 m in height. Leaf oblong, lanceolate, 6–17 cm long and 3–5 cm wide, alternately arranged on short petioles; bark thin, gray; flower greenish, fruit round, fleshy, drooping, heart-shaped, ovate or conical, 5–10 cm in diameter, with many round protuberance. The flesh of the fruit has a sweet, creamy, and granular texture with lots of seeds. Seeds 1.3–1.6cm long, oblong, smooth, shiny, blackish or dark brown. The fruit is associated with the sacred figure, the wife of Lord Rama, in the Ramayana record.

Parts used

Leaf, bark, root, fruit and seed.

Phyto-chemical constituents

Steroid, acetogenins, antho-cyanins, terpenoids, sesquiterpenes, quinones, glycoside, alkaloid, flavonoid, saponin, polyphenolics, volatile compounds, vitamin-C, vitamin-E, minerals, dietary fibre, carbohydrates, amino acids, and fatty acids.

Uses

Fruits are normally eaten fresh. Leaves and root are used to prepare tea. The pulp can be used as flavouring in ice cream and beverages. The tree is a good source of firewood.

Medicinal uses

Traditionally the plant has been employed for the treatment of epilepsy, dysentery, cardiac problem, parasite and worm infestations, constipation, haemorrhage, bacterial infection, dysuria, fever, ulcer and as insecticide. Leaves used to treat helminthiasis, hysteria, fainting spells and juice is used as vermifuge. Decoction of leaves is used to treat dysentery and infections in urinary tract, cough and cold. Crushed leaves are applied on wounds for healing. Seeds are used to treat digestive disorders. Seeds are used as insecticidal agent.

Root and bark is used in toothache. Unripe dried fruit and bark is helpful in diarrhoea. Fruits used as a hair tonic (Nagaveni and Priyanka, 2019). The crushed seeds are used against internal and external parasites, head lice, and worms. The bark, leaves, and roots are considered as sedative and nervine tonic. Dried powder of the fruit is used in the treatment of pus filled ulcer.



Conclusion

The fruit of *A. Squamosa* provide good carbohydrates nutrition, and acting as an excellent source of energy, minerals, like calcium, phosphorus and potassium. They are important in biological function, such as helping to protect bones and teeth, providing strong muscles and improving health. The plants having various pharmacological activity such as anti-diabetic, analgesic, anti-inflammatory, wound healing, anti-malarial, cyto-toxic, free radical scavenging, and anti-fungal.

Photo link:

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/web-stories/health-benefits-of-custard-apple-1814;>

<https://drlogy.com/food-facts/fruits/custard-apple-13-fantastic-health-benefits-nutrition-facts>

