



## Herbal Garden (Muligai Vanam)

### Siru Kala



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|-----------------------|---|----------------------------|
| <b>Botanical Name</b> | : | <i>Carissa spinarum</i> L. |
| <b>Tamil Name</b>     | : | Siru kala                  |
| <b>Sanskrit Name</b>  | : | Karamarada                 |
| <b>English Name</b>   | : | Wild Karanda               |

### Distribution and Habitat

*Carissa spinarum* L. is a large shrub of the family *Apocynaceae*. It is widely distributed in the tropical and subtropical regions of Africa, southern Asia, Australia and various islands of the Indian Ocean. In India this plant is found as wild in hills of dry regions across the country. Morphologically it is woody, extremely hard with forked branches, and grows up to a height of 2-3 meters.



The green leaves of the plant are glossy, waxy and tough oval-shaped, 1-5 cm in length. The branches bear thorns of 1-3 cm length and have white, star-shaped flowers across, berries green, ovate, 1-2 cm in length, turns black or dark purple when ripe. Fruits are referred to as carandas-plum, black currants and Bengal currants.

**Parts used:** Flowers, fruits, roots

### Phyto-chemical constituents

Palmitic, stearic, oleic, linoleic acids, triterpene alcohol, ursolic acid, myrcene, limonene, camphene, carene, dipentene, poly saccharides, alkaloids, terpenoids, saponins, carissin, tannins, pectin, lupeol, oxalic, tartaric, amino acids, poly-phenolics, and flavonoids.

### Uses

The raw fruits are cooked and used in jams. The roots are put into water filters to impart an agreeable taste to the water. The fruits are good source of tannins and are also used in dyeing.

## Medicinal uses

*C. spinarum* has a wide variety of applications in traditional medicine. Traditionally the leaves are used to treat external parasites and inflammation. The root is useful in treating post-delivery uterus problems. The fruit is an appetizer and also reduces body pain. The fruit is eaten to reduce ear



block. The unripe fruits are used for making pickles (Sudhaker, 2007). Fruits are rich in calcium, iron, vitamin C and A that are used as food and to treat a variety of illness including blood sugar stabilization, diarrhoea, anorexia and anaemia. The root decoction is used as an anthelmintic, especially against chest-complaints, and as a cough remedy tonic. The roots also contain an active ingredient called 'carissin', which is useful in the treatment of cancer. The roots are often added to the food of a sick person as an appetizer. The root bark is admixed with spices and used as enema for lumbago and other pains. The whole plant is used as 'bitter' and expectorant. The leaf decoction is used in the treatment of intermittent fever, diarrhoea, oral inflammation and earache. The boiled leaves are applied as a poultice to relieve toothache. The unripe fruits are rich in tannins and are astringent and the ripe fruits are taken as an antiscorbutic and remedy for biliousness. In traditional system of medicine, the plant is used as a purgative, treatment of rheumatism and snake bites, and cleaning of wounds of animals (Fatima et al. 2013). The whole plant is used for treatment of various diseases such as chronic inflammation, arthritis, liver complaints, kidney infection, cardiac diseases and diabetes. It has been reported after evaluation of various pharmacological activities, this plant exhibited antimicrobial, anthelmintic, anti-hyperlipidaemic, wound healing, anti-diabetic activity, antipyretic, hepato-protective and antioxidant.

**Photo link:** <https://powo.science.kew.org/taxon/urn:lsid:ipni.org:names:77756-1;>  
[https://www.inaturalist.org/taxa/369502-Carissa-spinarum/browse\\_photos](https://www.inaturalist.org/taxa/369502-Carissa-spinarum/browse_photos)

