

Kala Ghoda

Explore the beautiful trees in Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Prince of Wales Museum), Mumbai University, and on the roads of Kala Ghoda. Special thanks to Ms Doreen D'Sa for her invaluable assistance.

Star Apple



Common names: Star Apple, Cainito
Scientific name: *Chrysophyllum cainito*

A tree with yellowish green or white-purple flowers, Star Apple is named after its fruits, which have a star shaped core. The upper surface of the gorgeous leaves is a rich green, while the bottom surface is golden-brown. The fruits are round with a white pulp. The tree, which originates in the West Indies and Central America, is used in traditional medicine. Research suggests that parts of the tree possess antidiabetic, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and antimicrobial properties.

Indian Laburnum



Common name: Indian Laburnum, Golden Shower, Amaltas

Scientific name: *Cassia fistula*

When it flowers during the summer months, the Indian Laburnum looks like it is raining golden petals – hence the popular name, Golden Shower. It is also called Pudding Pipe Tree by the Dutch because of its long pods.

This stunning, medium-sized tree can be seen at the Museum and on the roadside near GPO and in Bandra. But Mumbaikars always associate it with Laburnum Road at Gamdevi that was once lined by dozens of Indian Laburnum trees. These had dwindled to five trees that rarely bloom in the shade of the other, larger trees on the street. The BMC has, however, undertaken to plant new laburnum saplings and is attempting to revive the older trees

– and it is hoped that the famous Laburnum Road will once again be filled with golden rain.

Pride of Burma



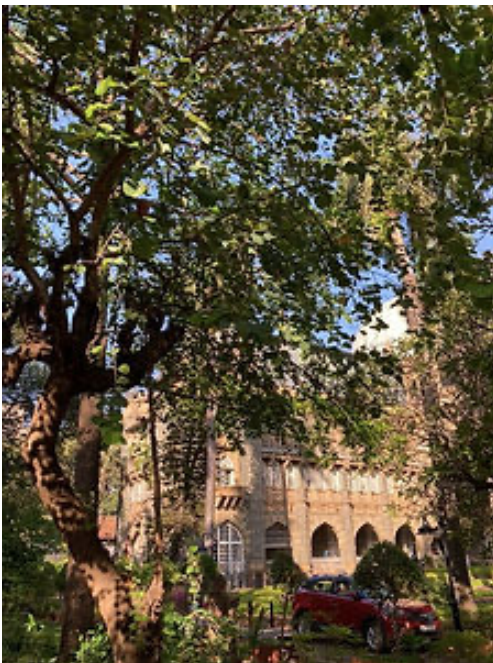
Common names: Pride of Burma, Tree of Heaven
Scientific name: *Amherstia nobilis*

Aptly called the Tree of Heaven, the tree's fascinating pink-red flowers make it frequently considered one of the most beautiful flowering trees in the world. It is a medium-sized evergreen tree which resembles the Ashoka tree when the flowers are not blooming.

There are very few *Amherstia nobilis* trees in Mumbai— they can either be seen at the Mumbai University Fort campus (where we were fortunate enough to see the flowers in bloom) or in Rani Bagh. The tree is native to Myanmar, where it was first documented by Dr Wallich in 1826 in a

monastery. The tree has only rarely been seen in the wild. It was named after the Countess of Amherst, wife of the governor of Myanmar.

Bakul



Common names: Bakul, Indian Medlar Tree, Bullet Wood, Elengi
Scientific name: *Mimusops elengi*

The tree has creamish, small, fragrant flowers, elliptic and oblong leaves, and yellow berries. The flowers are used to make perfumes and for headaches, the seeds for cooking, the fruit for eating, and the leaves for fodder. The tree is also used as an avenue tree, the bark for dyeing, and parts of the tree are used extensively in traditional medicine (for instance, for the teeth). The tree's wood is very strong.

Kadamb



Common name: Kadamb, Cadamba, Common Bur-flower Tree, Kadam, Wild Cinchona
Scientific name: *Neolamarckia cadamba*

This tall tree has yellow orange fragrant flowers in clusters and orange fruits with seeds dispersed by bats. The fruits can be eaten and the tree is used in traditional medicine (fevers, inflammation, coughs). Although some believe the tree is connected to Lord Krishna, some books say that it is actually another tree, the kaim, that is associated with Krishna.

Amla



Common names: Amla, Indian gooseberry, Emblic, Malacca tree, Aonla, Amlaki
Scientific name: *Phyllanthus emblica*

This deciduous tree has small leaves and flowers, and very sour, yellow green fruits. It is native to India. The fruits are used in the preparation of chutneys, pickles, juice, and murrabh. In Indian mythology it is the first tree that was created in the universe. The tree has great medicinal value, and it is used for jaundice, inflammation, diarrhea, constipation, fever, asthma, etc in traditional medicine. Parts show antitumor, antibacterial, antidiabetic, antioxidant, gastroprotective properties.

Wax Apple



Wax Apple, Java Apple, Chambakka
Scientific Name: *Syzygium samarangense*
Native: Bangladesh, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Southeast Asia

This medium-sized evergreen tree tends to grow in tropical regions and has white flowers. The tree is known for its fruit, which is sweet and juicy. Called chambakka in Kerala, the fruit is used to make various dishes, including pickles. It is often used in traditional medicine. For example, the fruit is consumed medicinally in Taiwan to treat diabetes, inflammation, and diarrhoea. The wood is used to make musical instruments.

Fishtail Palm



Common name: Fishtail Palm/ Jaggery Palm

Species: *Caryota urens*

Native: India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Myanmar

An evergreen palm with twice-feathered leaves that grow up to 7 m long and fruits that are red when ripe, the jaggery palm can be seen across Mumbai.

The stem can be fashioned into a utensil to collect water from wells and the leaves are used to make baskets. When boiled, the sap can be made into 'jaggery' sugar. In Sri Lanka, the sap is used to make a sweetener called kithul.